



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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December 12, 1995

For immediate release:

PROCESSED

DEC 18 1995

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CONTENTS

PAGE

- **NEWS DIGEST** 1
- **Preliminary hearing held in trial of bishop who ordained non-celibate homosexual (95-1322)** 10
- **Presiding Bishop urges rethinking of Christian churches' advocacy (95-1323)** 12
- **Delegation of church leaders visits White House in midst of budget debate (95-1324)** 14
- **Browning joins other church leaders in praising peace efforts in Ireland and Bosnia (95-1325)** 16
- **Tutu named to head South Africa's truth commission (95-1326)** 18
- **Episcopal Church facing major ecumenical decisions--in a climate of indifference (95-1327)** 20
- **Church of England Synod struggles with sexuality document and reorganization (95-1328)** 22
- **Women's ordination controversy simmers in Church of England, but causes no mass exodus (95-1329)** 23
- **Catholic supporters of women's ordination call for**

"discipleship of equals" (95-1330)	25
------------------------------------	----

■ Nominating Committee for Presiding Bishop develops criteria for office (95-1331)	27
--	----

■ Russian Orthodox patriarch reaffirms ties to Episcopal Church (95-1332)	29
---	----

NEWSBRIEFS (95-1333)	31
----------------------	----

NEWSFEATURES

Executive Council committee raises concerns about Church Pension Group management style (95-1334)	45
---	----

Teleconference focuses on what's broken in U.S. politics (95-1335)	48
--	----

Episcopal bishop of Southwest Virginia returns sacred land to Monacan Indians (95-1336)	50
---	----

Diocese of Colorado explores Episcopal version of Promise Keepers gathering of men (95-1337)	52
--	----

Statement of the Presiding Bishop on the Federal Budget (95-1338)	54
---	----

National Council of Churches declaration on proposed federal spending priorities and their effect on vulnerable families, the elderly and children (95-1339)	55
--	----

Presiding Bishop's statement on President Clinton's peace initiatives in Ireland and Bosnia (95-1340)	57
---	----

Consultation describes campus ministries as 'out on a limb' (95-1341)	58
---	----

Fundraising conference at Kanuga offers Americans and Canadians chance to share skills (95-1342)	61
--	----

Reviews and Resources	64
-----------------------	----



news digest

95-1322D

Preliminary hearing held in trial of bishop who ordained non-celibate homosexual

(ENS) On a cold, blustery day in Hartford, Connecticut, December 8, the Episcopal Church's Court for the Trial of a Bishop convened to consider pre-trial motions in the case of a bishop accused of teaching false doctrine and breaking his ordination vows.

The nine bishops on the court met in an upstairs lounge at Christ Church Cathedral to establish the guidelines for the historic trial of Bishop Walter Righter, 72, the retired bishop of Iowa, who is charged with "holding and teaching . . . doctrine contrary to that held by the church" for signing a document supporting the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals, and with violating his ordination vows for ordaining a non-celibate homosexual as a deacon.

While the court bishops made only one ruling--not to disqualify four of the their members who signed the same statement as Righter--they withdrew at the end of the day to consider several motions brought by the attorneys arguing the case that could affect the shape of the trial. Rulings in those other motions are expected to be announced in about two weeks.

Before withdrawing, however, the court announced that the site of the trial was being moved from Hartford to Wilmington, Delaware. Bishop Clarence Coleridge of Connecticut later reported that he had requested that the site be changed because the prospect of a trial had become "too intrusive" in the life of the diocese.

The change of venue to the Cathedral of St. John in Wilmington will not affect the originally announced schedule of the trial, reported Sue Reid, canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Indianapolis, who is serving as clerk of the court. The court will next convene for the trial hearing, February 27-29, she said.

95-1323D

Presiding Bishop urges rethinking of Christian churches' advocacy

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning called on the members of the National Council of Churches (NCC) to find "renewed energy and commitment" for public policy advocacy at a two-day consultation sponsored by the NCC to discuss the churches' public policy work in Washington, December 7.

In prepared remarks, Browning acknowledged, "These are difficult times for [the mainline churches'] public policy witness," noting congressional attempts to scale back social policies and the rise of the Christian Coalition. He explained, "We need to recapture the language of morality and Christian values" from the "radical right," who, he noted, "do not have a monopoly on 'family values.'" He urged the churches to highlight the Scriptural basis for their public policy positions, such as support for the poor and hungry. "These words have meaning in the real world," Browning noted. "Let them ring out, loud and clear."

Much of the consultation of top church officials and their Washington staff focused on how to structure the NCC Washington office, which Browning hoped would be a "resource for all [denominations] to use," and would "convene . . . and facilitate our communication." Several current and former members of Congress who were asked to speak to the gathering suggested that the mainline churches try to use the successful strategies of the Christian Coalition.

95-1324D

Delegation of church leaders visits White House in midst of budget debate

(ENS) In a hastily arranged visit to the White House, November 18, more than a dozen of the nation's top Christian leaders "laid hands" on President Bill Clinton and prayed that he would protect the vulnerable--children, families and the elderly--in negotiations with Congress over the national budget.

The general board of the National Council of Churches (NCC), meeting in Oakland, California, November 15-17, authorized the delegation as Clinton and Congress remained locked in a struggle over the budget that partially closed the federal government for nearly a week.

The delegation included Pamela Chinnis, president of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies and a member of the NCC's executive committee, who represented Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, and Bishop Craig Anderson, president of

General Theological Seminary in New York and president-elect of the NCC's general board.

The delegation presented a resolution urging the president and Congress to reject any budget proposals that harmed "children, the capacity of their parents to care for them, and the moral well-being of our nation as a whole." As "people of earnest faith, we are called to stand with those in our nation who are poor and to seek justice on their behalf," the resolution states. "As we are accountable to the God who gave life to all, we cannot remain silent!"

The laying on of hands was "a recognition in the Oval Office that prayer changes things," said the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, NCC general secretary. And, observing that "this will be a difficult day," Clinton said, "This is a fine way to begin it."

Earlier, Browning issued his own statement calling on the president and Congress to resolve their differences on the federal budget with "compassion and civility."

Saying that the time has come to "lower our voices, listen, and pursue common ground," Browning criticized the "angry speeches, staged press events, and hard-line posturing" that he said "serve only to divide us."

95-1325D

Browning joins other church leaders in praising peace efforts in Ireland and Bosnia

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning has joined a number of church leaders who are praising peace efforts in Ireland and Bosnia. In a statement issued December 4, he said that President Bill Clinton had "taken on the noble cause of peacemaking" and that such a role "brings honor to him and to the United States." He added that adopting the role of peacemaker was a proper one for the United States "in the wake of the end of the cold war."

Browning also expressed gratitude that Clinton was "lifting up moral values in shaping his policy in Bosnia and Ireland," contending that "it is the moral part of his argument that is compelling and right."

Pointing out that he has opposed the use of American troops in the past, especially during the Gulf War, Browning said that "now it is worth the risk for U.S. troops to maintain and implement a peace already made. The world could not bear any longer to allow the atrocities of that conflict to continue," the statement said.

"I am also relieved that our troops are not being sent in to Bosnia to engage in combat, but rather are there to engage in peacemaking," Browning added. "Soldiers cannot ultimately do the hard work of reconciliation and healing. But they can hold

the promise of establishing the conditions in which a deep and enduring reconciliation can be pursued."

Browning ended the statement with calls for prayer "for the day when all countries, including our own, will lay down their arms, a day when violent conflict will be obsolete."

The Rev. Canon Brian Grieves, peace and justice officer for the Episcopal Church, was one of six church leaders who went to Ireland with Clinton. In an interview after his return, he said that the visit turned out to be "much more than a political visit," citing Clinton's use of Scripture to instill a religious tone. The trip was also more than a ceremonial one. It had "the characteristic of a mission for peace--and the president was superb in evoking those images," said Grieves, who was representing the presiding bishop.

95-1326D

Tutu named to head South Africa's truth commission

(ENS) South Africa's President Nelson Mandela has named Desmond Tutu, the Anglican archbishop of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, to chair the nation's 17-member Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will investigate atrocities committed during the former apartheid era.

The task of the commission is to investigate human rights violations by both the former apartheid state and members of the liberation movements, including the murder, kidnapping and massacre of political opponents. The commission could hear about a thousand cases of gross human rights violations.

The commission will also investigate the disappearance of anti-apartheid activists and deaths in detention, and will have the powers to grant amnesty to those who voluntarily confess to politically inspired crimes and human rights violations. However, government authorities said that those seeking amnesty would have to make full disclosure, not just confession, before their application would be considered.

Archbishop Tutu said that the emphasis in the commission should not be on reprisal and retribution.

"South Africa cannot afford a Nuremberg-type situation," he said, in a reference to the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War in which 24 Nazi leaders were accused of crimes against humanity.

95-1327D

Episcopal Church facing major ecumenical decisions--in a climate of indifference

(ENS) After 25 years of official theological dialogue with the Lutherans, the Episcopal Church stands on the brink of a major ecumenical breakthrough as it considers the "Concordat of Agreement," a proposal that both churches enter "full communion." So far, however, the proposal, which could open some stunning new possibilities for ministry together, is languishing in a pool of ignorance, according to reports to the church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (SCER).

"Ignorance and apathy are more dangerous than hostility to the Concordat's proposals for full communion," Midge Roof, president of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers said at the commission's October meeting in Minneapolis. Despite more than 30 regional covenants, and over 50 examples of Lutheran and Episcopal parishes sharing facilities, "vast numbers of Episcopalians--including many who will make the decision at the 1997 General Convention--are unaware or indifferent to the proposals."

Roof lamented the fact that, even in dioceses engaged in years of dialogue, "the news isn't out, souls have not caught fire, and diocesan structures and congregations remain completely unaffected."

"We face a crucial challenge of educating people in our church about the implications of this decision before the General Convention votes," said the Rev. David Perry, the church's ecumenical officer.

"This dialogue and the Concordat proposals it has produced is something very special, precious and delicate--and incredibly important for the ecumenical movement," Prof. Gunther Gassmann of Germany, a Lutheran who is former head of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, told the commission. "One can tremble, but also pray with hope, that the Concordat will go through and be a good response to those who still doubt the value of dialogue."

95-1328D

Church of England Synod struggles with sexuality document and reorganization

(ENS) Opening the sixth General Synod of the Church of England on November 28, Queen Elizabeth II called attention to the "painstaking care" with which the synod had tried in the past to "accommodate and hold together people of all opinions." She added that, "since its earliest days, the Christian Church has wrestled with issues where opinions are as deeply held as they are divided." And she expressed

her hope that "your faith, friendship and common purpose will, I pray, be strong and durable as you show what St. Paul meant when he urged Christians to speak the truth to one another in love."

The agenda tested those bonds as the synod struggled with the implications of a report that urged tolerance of different lifestyles--and considered proposals for a drastic reorganization of church structures.

The day the synod prepared to debate the controversial report, "Something to Celebrate," that argued everyone should find a place of welcome in the church, no matter what their sexual lifestyle, it heard a warning from a senior ecumenical leader.

Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, said that many churches were "deeply divided and even threatened in their unity in the face of conflicts about the ethics of life, of procreation and sexuality. He warned that the "unity of the church and the quality of its life as an inclusive community" were at stake.

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey strongly attacked the study document because it had not focused clearly enough on the traditional family. He said that the report left the impression that "no single form of the family" was a God-given ideal. While the church should "serve people with humility and respect, whatever their circumstances," he added that "this does not diminish the wisdom and truth of the Christian tradition that a married man and woman and their children should be the basic building blocks for family life." Severed from lifelong total commitment, "sexual activity becomes potentially destructive, the source of untold pain, indignity and social breakdowns," Carey contended.

The synod passed an amendment affirming the church's belief in marriage while noting the variety of family relationships. The proposal of the Turnbull Commission, which calls for a drastic streamlining of the governing mechanisms of the church, survived some stiff opposition and will be revised and returned for further debate next February. The Turnbull Commission, named for its chair, Bishop Michael Turnbull of Durham, proposed a National Council with broad executive powers under the leadership of the archbishops of Canterbury and York.

95-1329D

Women's ordination controversy simmers in Church of England, but causes no mass exodus

(ENS) The ordination of women by the Church of England appears not to have caused the feared mass exodus of Anglican priests to Rome.

During a recent visit to Portugal and Spain, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey made it "very clear that there is no rush of people" leaving the Church of

England in the wake of its January, 1994, vote to ordain women to the priesthood.

Citing earlier predictions that as many as 4,000 priests would leave the church, Carey said that "the number is about 250 at the present time--and the majority of these are elderly and not all of them have become Roman Catholics." And he pointed out that "spiritual journeys can go either way. We know Roman Catholics who become Anglicans."

Despite the obvious differences between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church, Carey also argued that the relationship between the two has become deeper and warmer in recent decades. The two communions "are not at war with each other," he said, adding, however, that "no church or denomination can avoid the challenge of the ordination of women to the priesthood."

Still, opponents to women's ordination in the Church of England continue to voice grave concerns about the long-term impact. One of the three "flying bishops" appointed to minister to those in the Church of England who are unable to accept women in the priesthood said that the church's General Synod made a mistake when it cleared the way for the ordination of women to the priesthood.

Parishes could force a reversal of the decision and sweep away the synod's "silly decision," Bishop Edwin Barnes said in a recent BBC radio interview. "What we've done we can undo," he said. "We are in a phase, not of reception, but of discernment and that means discerning what is right and what is wrong."

95-1330D

Catholic supporters of women's ordination call for "discipleship of equals"

(ENS) As the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops began its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in mid-November, over a thousand Catholics from North America and 17 other countries assembled nearby--but with a decidedly different agenda. In the 20th gathering of the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC), they met to push the issue of ordaining women to the Catholic priesthood into ever broader arenas.

Their vision called for a fully inclusive ministry in a fully reformed faith community, modeled after the early church prior to the rise of a cultic priesthood.

A presentation by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Krister Stendahl professor of divinity at Harvard Divinity School and renowned author, offered the theological cornerstone for the conference. Fiorenza is convinced that "equal ordination is the test case, but that unconditional prerequisites for women considering ordination are the transformation of a celibate priesthood, a hierarchical church, a male-clerical theology" and what she said is now a "woman-free zone." Otherwise, she said,

ordination means "sub-ordination" in a denomination entrapped by "Caesar's imperial structures."

Fiorenza said she sees her vision of a "discipleship of equals" as an active process that has been "under way in world Catholicism for most of this century." Reassuring her audience that "we are not the first to do this and we are not alone," Fiorenza said, "There is a great cloud of witnesses throughout the centuries.... Struggle is indeed a name for hope."

95-1331D

Nominating Committee for Presiding Bishop develops criteria for office

(ENS) The Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of a Presiding Bishop developed broad criteria for the office at its third working session in Florida, November 17-19.

"The committee has a strong sense of community--and we are excited about what the church is asking us to do," said Bishop Cal Schofield of Southeast Florida, co-chair. "We are moving along at a rapid rate, covering a lot of ground to meet our mandate." He added that the committee meetings are undergirded by worship, which has helped committee members to be "very open to God's call."

Kathy Tyler Scott of Indianapolis, the other co-chair, agreed that the committee was proceeding with a strong sense of its task. "We are working diligently and prayerfully in our efforts to prepare the church for this important decision," she said. "Our task is to help the church improve the quality of its decision."

The committee hopes that a final list of candidates will be developed at its meeting in California in March, 1996. So far, the committee has received 29 names in response to its initial mailing inviting recommendations from General Convention deputies, bishops and other church leaders.

Additional nominations are sought until January 15. Nomination forms are available from the committee secretary, Russell Palmore, Jr., P.O. Box 1122, Richmond, VA 23208.

95-1332D

Russian Orthodox patriarch reaffirms ties to Episcopal Church

(ENS) The close relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Russian Orthodox Church was strongly reaffirmed during a recent meeting in Moscow of the joint coordinating committee established in 1989 to promote cooperation between the two churches.

At a gathering of more than 50 Russian metropolitans and bishops, attended by the committee, Patriarch Alexy II made a forceful statement of his appreciation for the assistance of the Episcopal Church, especially in the area of social ministry.

"The patriarch was forthright in welcoming our ECUSA delegation as the Russian Orthodox Church's closest ecumenical partners in his welcome, toast and speech," reported Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee, Episcopal chair of the committee. "The patriarch left no doubt of his deep commitment to this close relationship."

Given a mood among some Russian Orthodox bishops of animosity toward the proselytizing efforts of other denominations, the ringing endorsement at such an event was "deeply appreciated," said the Rev. David Perry, national ecumenical officer. The patriarch stressed that "the Episcopal Church is opposed to proselytism, that our relationship is a model of real ecumenical relations," Perry said.

The committee includes three members from each church appointed by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and the patriarch, as well as national ecumenical officers. During its business session, members developed initial plans for a possible theological dialogue on ecclesiology to be held in early 1997 in Russia.

95-1322

Preliminary hearing held in trial of bishop who ordained non-celibate homosexual

by James Solheim

(ENS) On a cold, blustery day in Hartford, Connecticut, December 8, the Episcopal Church's Court for the Trial of a Bishop convened to consider pre-trial motions in the case of a bishop accused of teaching false doctrine and breaking his ordination vows.

The nine bishops on the court met in an upstairs lounge at Christ Church Cathedral to establish the guidelines for the historic trial of Bishop Walter Righter, 72, the retired bishop of Iowa, who is charged with "holding and teaching . . . doctrine contrary to that held by the church" for signing a document supporting the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals, and with violating his ordination vows for ordaining a non-celibate homosexual as a deacon.

The trial is only the second such "heresy" trial involving a bishop in the church's history. In 1924 a retired bishop of Arkansas was deposed for teaching that communism had superceded Christianity. After introducing himself at the beginning of the day as "Walter Righter, the heretic," Righter sat quietly at the table of his attorney, Michael Rehill, the chancellor of the Diocese of Newark. His wife, Nancy, sat by his side, knitting.

While the court bishops made only one ruling--not to disqualify four of the their members who signed the same statement as Righter--they withdrew at the end of the day to consider several motions brought by the attorneys arguing the case that could affect the shape of the trial. Rulings in those other motions are expected to be announced in about two weeks.

Before withdrawing, however, the court announced that the site of the trial was being moved from Hartford to Wilmington, Delaware. Bishop Clarence Coleridge of Connecticut later reported that he had requested that the site be changed because the prospect of a trial had become "too intrusive" in the life of the diocese.

The change of venue to the Cathedral of St. John in Wilmington will not affect the originally announced schedule of the trial, reported Sue Reid, canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Indianapolis, who is serving as clerk of the court. The court will next convene for the trial hearing, February 27-29, she said.

Court denies motions to disqualify four judges

The court spent most of the morning considering a motion from the prosecution that sought to disqualify four of the bishops on the court for signing a document called "A Statement in Koinonia" at the 1994 General Convention. Signed

by 71 bishops, that statement said that "homosexuality and heterosexuality are morally neutral," that faithful, monogamous same-sex relationships "are to be honored," and that homosexuals in committed relationships should be considered for ordination on an equal footing with heterosexuals. The four bishops cited were Bishop Edward Jones of Indianapolis, president of the court; Bishop Frederick Borsch of Los Angeles; Bishop Arthur Walmsley, retired bishop of Connecticut; and Bishop Douglas Theuner of New Hampshire. Other bishops on the court are Andrew Fairfield of North Dakota, Robert Johnson of North Carolina, Donis Patterson of Dallas, Calvin Cabell Tennis of Delaware, and Roger White of Milwaukee.

Hugo Blankingship, former chancellor of the Diocese of Virginia who is serving as church advocate or prosecuting attorney, claimed that the "The Koinonia Statement" challenges the church's teaching authority. Drawing on both scriptural and common law sources, he said that judges should disqualify themselves if there is any cause for a reasonable person to question their impartiality. "In the end it is a question of perception," he said.

Rehill countered that "this is not a secular court," charging that "what is happening here is an attempt to frame a court that will follow the view of the presenters," those who brought the charges against Righter. He contended that the judges were making a political statement, not a doctrinal one, when they signed the Koinonia Statement. "Everything is political--and that's okay. It's the way we attempt to discern the truth in the body of Christ," he said. "But we don't change doctrine based on majority vote."

After the nine bishops held a 90-minute private session, Jones emerged to say that the motions to disqualify "were seriously considered but the court has decided to deny the motions."

What is the doctrine?

The afternoon session dealt with attempts by Rehill to separate the two counts against Righter--one based on the so-called "heresy canon" for holding and teaching doctrine contrary to that held by the church, and the other for alleged violation of ordination vows. He argued that the court did not have jurisdiction on the second count because canonical procedure had not been properly followed.

Though coming from very different perspectives, both sides clearly agreed that it was necessary for the court to determine whether the church has a doctrine on the issue of non-celibate homosexual ordinations. While Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire, author of the original presentment and co-counsel with Blankingship, argued for a different approach to dividing the trial, he was adamant that "the question of doctrine is the threshold issue that must be decided before you can proceed."

"You must decide whether or not there is a doctrine in this church that it is wrong to ordain a non-celibate homosexual," Rehill said. "But even if it exists, it's

not clear that this bishop is guilty," he added. "You must establish that he acted 'knowingly and advisedly,' contrary to the church's teaching." According to Rehill the court was required to establish that a doctrine exists, that Righter knew and understood that doctrine, and that he deliberately chose to defy it.

Rehill suggested that the court meet in January for a full-blown discussion on that crucial issue, based on the original briefs in the case, a suggestion the court apparently has not followed. Wantland countered that such a discussion could not be limited to the original documents, that there was an obligation to lay before the court all relevant items.

Diocese is brunt of misunderstandings

The decision to move the site of the trial came as a surprise to most observers. Bishop Clarence Coleridge of Connecticut admitted in a statement that he was surprised by the negative reaction from members of the diocese. Many expressed anger over the waste of church resources for the trial and questioned the role of the diocese in hosting the trial. Published estimates of the cost have run as high as \$1 million, and the bishop reported that diocesan leaders faced a further misconception on the part of some callers that "the diocese was spending the money."

Coleridge added that the media attention the trial was attracting also disturbed him and many of those who expressed criticism. "This was really drawing attention, in a negative way, to the trial and away from the real issues of the church," he said.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. James H. Thrall, deputy director, contributed to this article.

95-1323

Presiding Bishop urges rethinking of Christian Churches advocacy

by Thomas Hart

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning called on the members of the National Council of Churches (NCC) to find "renewed energy and commitment" for public policy advocacy at a two-day consultation sponsored by the NCC to discuss the churches' public policy work in Washington, December 7.

In prepared remarks, Browning acknowledged, "These are difficult times for [the mainline churches'] public policy witness," noting congressional attempts to scale back social policies and the rise of the Christian Coalition. He explained, "We need to recapture the language of morality and Christian values" from the "radical right," who, he noted, "do not have a monopoly on 'family values.'" He urged the churches to highlight the Scriptural basis for their public policy positions, such as support for the poor and hungry. "These words have meaning in the real world," Browning noted. "Let them ring out, loud and clear."

Browning also urged the churches to reach out to conservative Christians who "have found something comforting in the radical right's message." He acknowledged that conservative Christian groups have spoken to people's fears about jobs and violence, but provided answers of "division, scapegoating, and hate." He believed that "many Americans are uncomfortable with those answers, but haven't been presented with any alternative."

Much of the consultation of top church officials and their Washington staff focused on how to structure the NCC Washington office, which Browning hoped would be a "resource for all [denominations] to use," and would "convene . . . and facilitate our communication." Several current and former members of Congress who were asked to speak to the gathering suggested that the mainline churches try to use the successful strategies of the Christian Coalition.

While supporting techniques such as grassroots building and media use, Browning noted that the churches' ability to mimic the Christian Coalition was limited. "We are churches," Browning stated, "not political organizations." Unlike the Christian Coalition, churches are different from one another and even from other churches within their own denominations. "We don't have one person who can speak for the entire group." He argued that "while our diversity is a [political] limitation, it is also a great asset." The religious community can have "quite an impact when all of the individual voices come together with the same message" such as caring for children and those who are poor, hungry, or sick, he said.

--Thomas Hart is the legislative assistant in the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

95-1324

Delegation of church leaders visits White House in midst of budget debate

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) In a hastily arranged visit to the White House, November 18, more than a dozen of the nation's top Christian leaders "laid hands" on President Bill Clinton and prayed that he would protect the vulnerable--children, families and the elderly--in negotiations with Congress over the national budget.

The general board of the National Council of Churches (NCC), meeting in Oakland, California, November 15-17, authorized the delegation as Clinton and Congress remained locked in a struggle over the budget that partially closed the federal government for nearly a week. The delegation's prayers were for "a nation in crisis," and "for the president as the guardian of the nation," NCC General Secretary Joan Brown Campbell said.

The delegation included Pamela Chinnis, president of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies and a member of the NCC's executive committee, who represented Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, and Bishop Craig Anderson, president of General Theological Seminary in New York and president-elect of the NCC's general board.

Browning's words prompt delegation

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, who attended the NCC board meeting, initiated the move to send a delegation, but was unable to take part because of a scheduling conflict, Chinnis reported. As the board was discussing a resolution on the national budget debate, Browning "said this is so important that we should send somebody to carry this to the president," Chinnis said. The proposal was approved unanimously.

The resolution urged the president and Congress to reject any budget proposals that harmed "children, the capacity of their parents to care for them, and the moral well-being of our nation as a whole." As "people of earnest faith, we are called to stand with those in our nation who are poor and to seek justice on their behalf," the resolution states. "As we are accountable to the God who gave life to all, we cannot remain silent!"

The delegation sat in as an audience to Clinton's weekly radio broadcast in the Oval Office, and then met with him while Clinton explained his position in the budget debate at length, Chinnis said. At the end of the 45-minute audience, Campbell explained to Clinton that the "laying on of hands" is an ancient ritual symbolizing the outpouring of God's spirit on the person being prayed for. The 15 visitors gathered

around Clinton while Bishop Nathaniel Linsey of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church prayed.

The laying on of hands was "a recognition in the Oval Office that prayer changes things," Campbell said. And, observing that "this will be a difficult day," Clinton said, "This is a fine way to begin it."

Visit not intended as partisan

Chinnis said she would have welcomed similar visits to Republican leaders of Congress "in terms of being bipartisan and getting the message to both sides of the aisles," but said meeting with the president was what the board felt called to do. She said she was impressed by Clinton's presentation. "He speaks in a very forthright way and looks you directly in the eye," she said.

The visit was "not in any way a partisan effort," but rather, "an attempt to rise above that," Anderson said. "I think the intent was to go to the President of the United States, the leader," he said. "If you tried to do otherwise, where do you begin and where do you end?"

Anderson said he also was impressed with the personal attention the president paid individual members of the delegation. "He had done his homework. He knew that I was from New York," he said. Clinton also had "clearly read and digested what we had brought him," and seemed to feel that the resolution did not recognize sufficiently the efforts he was making, Anderson said. "He was saying, 'I'm addressing in my stance what you are concerned about.'"

Browning statement calls for civility

Earlier, Browning had issued his own statement calling on the president and Congress to resolve their differences on the federal budget with "compassion and civility."

Saying that the time has come to "lower our voices, listen, and pursue common ground," Browning criticized the "angry speeches, staged press events, and hard-line posturing" that he said "serve only to divide us."

In his statement dated November 15, Browning acknowledged that tough choices must be made to bring the budget into balance, but cautioned that some of the choices offered are neither just nor responsible. "Will we abandon our commitment to those who are poor?" he asked. "Will we restrict health care to some children and the elderly?"

Browning reminded the nation's leaders that "the looming debate over the federal budget will show our true colors as a nation," and that "millions of Americans are watching." He stressed that "a hungry child is no recipe for a balanced budget. Neither is a family plunged into poverty. Neither is an immigrant who is denied essential services. Neither is a mother who cannot find employment."

In both daily life and budget debates, he said, others must be treated "as we would like to be treated--with compassion, respect, and dignity."

Catholic bishops also speak out for poor

The NCC visit to the White House came on the heels of a pronouncement by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops strongly opposing revisions in welfare, health care and taxes proposed by the Republicans in Congress. The statement by William Cardinal Keeler, president of the conference, reiterated calls by Pope John Paul II "to defend the unborn, protect the poor, care for the weak and welcome the immigrant." Six weeks after the pope's visit to the United States, Keeler said, "our government is considering measures which will hurt the very people our Holy Father called us to defend."

Other denominations represented in the delegation included: the Moravian Church in North America, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Armenian Church in America, the Disciples of Christ, the Progressive Baptist Convention, and the United Church of Christ.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. This report includes material from National Council of Churches news releases.

95-1325

Browning joins other church leaders in praising peace efforts in Ireland and Bosnia

by James Solheim

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning has joined a number of church leaders who are praising peace efforts in Ireland and Bosnia. In a statement issued December 4 (text in Newsfeatures section), he said that President Bill Clinton had "taken on the noble cause of peacemaking" and that such a role "brings honor to him and to the United States." He added that adopting the role of peacemaker was a proper one for the United States "in the wake of the end of the cold war."

Browning also expressed gratitude that Clinton was "lifting up moral values in shaping his policy in Bosnia and Ireland," contending that "it is the moral part of his argument that is compelling and right."

Pointing out that he has opposed the use of American troops in the past, especially during the Gulf War, Browning said that "now it is worth the risk for U.S. troops to maintain and implement a peace already made. The world could not bear any longer to allow the atrocities of that conflict to continue," the statement said.

"I am also relieved that our troops are not being sent in to Bosnia to engage in combat, but rather are there to engage in peacemaking," Browning added. "Soldiers cannot ultimately do the hard work of reconciliation and healing. But they can hold the promise of establishing the conditions in which a deep and enduring reconciliation can be pursued."

Browning ended the statement with calls for prayer "for the day when all countries, including our own, will lay down their arms, a day when violent conflict will be obsolete."

Religious leaders join Clinton on visit to Ireland

The Rev. Canon Brian Grieves, peace and justice officer for the Episcopal Church, was one of six church leaders who went to Ireland with Clinton. In an interview after his return, he said that the visit turned out to be "much more than a political visit," citing Clinton's use of Scripture to instill a religious tone. The trip was more than a ceremonial one, it had "the characteristic of a mission for peace--and the president was superb in evoking those images," said Grieves, who was representing the presiding bishop.

"The president evoked high moral themes and lifted up values that are at the center of the Gospel and which we affirm in our baptismal vows," he said. "They were the values of peace over war, negotiation and dialogue over violence, healing and reconciliation rather than hate."

Grieves also drew links between the president's words in Ireland and his actions in Bosnia. "In looking at the situation in Bosnia it is hard to see any reason, other than the moral one, for the president to take the actions he has--and for that he deserves credit from the religious community," he said.

Grieves also talked about the exuberant crowds and the tumultuous welcome the president's party received, recalling "the face of an older woman who caught my attention as our bus moved slowly through the streets. She waved at me and our eyes locked. Then a great smile broke out on her face and I was really one with her in the joy of that moment."

United Methodist Bishop Melvin Talbert of San Francisco, incoming president of the National Council of Churches (NCC), echoed Grieves' comments about the deep enthusiasm for the peace initiative. He said many ordinary people reached out to shake his hand and ask for prayers. Yet he also heard and saw evidence that the Irish know that "the road to peace was going to be tough but this was a very important beginning."

NCC welcomes peace process

At its November meeting, the General Board of the National Council of Churches welcomed the cease-fire in the former Yugoslavia and expressed its hopes that the people of the area will "work together to build a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society, which in the long run is the only hope for peace in the region."

The NCC statement also said that it "values the persistent and often unappreciated efforts of the United Nations to contain conflicts, negotiate solutions, provide human assistance and protect people in spite of broken agreements and insufficient backing from UN member nations."

--James Solheim is the Episcopal Church's director of news and information.

95-1326

Tutu named to head South Africa's truth commission

(ENS) South Africa's President Nelson Mandela has named Desmond Tutu, the Anglican archbishop of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, to chair the nation's 17-member Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will investigate atrocities committed during the former apartheid era.

In a statement released November 29, Professor Jakes Gerwel, the cabinet secretary, said: "The appointment of the commissioners marks an important stage in this historic process of coming to an understanding of our past, of reconciliation and of reconstruction of this once deeply-divided and conflict-ridden society now in pursuit of a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence of all its citizens."

The commission could hear about a thousand cases of gross human rights violations.

The task of the commission is to investigate human rights violations by both the former apartheid state and members of the liberation movements, including the murder, kidnapping and massacre of political opponents.

The commission will also investigate the disappearance of anti-apartheid activists and deaths in detention. and will have the powers to grant amnesty to those

who voluntarily confess to politically inspired crimes and human rights violations. However, government authorities said that those seeking amnesty would have to make full disclosure, not just confession, before their application would be considered.

Archbishop Tutu said that the emphasis in the commission should not be on reprisal and retribution.

"South Africa cannot afford a Nuremberg-type situation," he said, in a reference to the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War in which 24 Nazi leaders were accused of crimes against humanity.

Senior officials of the security forces of the apartheid regime oppose the Truth Commission, saying that it would reignite the vengeance and violence of the past and not lead to national reconciliation.

In addition to other religious leaders, the commission includes lawyers, human rights activists, a psychologist and a social worker.

Churches urged to assist commission

A recent meeting of church leaders in Johannesburg urged all the country's congregations to aid the commission's work by encouraging people to come forward.

Churches, the leaders said, offer "a network second to none to ensure all people know of the commission." Congregations also can offer pastoral care to victims and perpetrators of human rights abuses, and help in the healing process.

Also speaking out in support of the commission was the provincial synod of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. The synod called the commission "a God-given opportunity for the people of southern Africa to wrestle with our collective and individual past and to seek healing," and said all Anglican parishes should be helped to provide information to their communities. Facilitators should be trained to "assist in the process of healing memories within local communities," the synod stated.

While the synod celebrated "acts of courage and self-sacrifice," it said the church needed to approach the commission in a spirit of repentance, recognizing our own sins of commission, omission and complicity with the evil of apartheid."

The Anglican dean of Pretoria, the Rev. Joe Seoka, has been named convenor of a national task group to assist Anglican congregations with the task.

--Based on articles by Ecumenical News International (ENI) and the Church of Province of Southern Africa News Service (CPSA).

95-1327

Episcopal Church facing major ecumenical decisions--in a climate of indifference

by James Solheim

(ENS) After 25 years of official theological dialogue with the Lutherans, the Episcopal Church stands on the brink of a major ecumenical breakthrough as it considers the "Concordat of Agreement," a proposal that both churches enter "full communion." So far, however, the proposal, which could open some stunning new possibilities for ministry together, is languishing in a pool of ignorance, according to reports at a meeting of the church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (SCER).

"Ignorance and apathy are more dangerous than hostility to the Concordat's proposals for full communion," Midge Roof, president of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers said at the commission's October meeting in Minneapolis. Despite more than 30 regional covenants, and over 50 examples of Lutheran and Episcopal parishes sharing facilities, "vast numbers of Episcopalians--including many who will make the decision at the 1997 General Convention--are unaware or indifferent to the proposals."

Roof lamented the fact that, even in dioceses engaged in years of dialogue, "the news isn't out, souls have not caught fire, and diocesan structures and congregations remain completely unaffected."

"We face a crucial challenge of educating people in our church about the implications of this decision before the General Convention votes," said the Rev. David Perry, the church's ecumenical officer.

Important for ecumenical movement

"This dialogue and the Concordat proposals it has produced is something very special, precious and delicate--and incredibly important for the ecumenical movement," Prof. Gunther Gassmann of Germany, a Lutheran who is former head of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, told the commission. "One can tremble, but also pray with hope, that the Concordat will go through and be a good response to those who still doubt the value of dialogue."

The two churches have been sharing the Eucharist, based on a 1982 agreement, but the Concordat would recognize a common ministry and allow interchangeability of clergy, including bishops. Lutherans would also accept the historic episcopate, as recognized by some Lutherans in European churches, by including at least three Episcopal bishops in future consecrations of its own bishops.

Most of the stated opposition among Lutherans at this point swirls around the

introduction of the historic episcopate. "It is forcing Lutherans to look at who they are, not only here but also in an international context," Bishop Ralph Kempfski of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) said during a discussion. "You force us to face the issues of how our ministry is ordered," added Dr. William Rusch, who was the ELCA's ecumenical officer until the office was recently reorganized.

One of the obstacles that has emerged is the misconception that the Concordat is calling for some kind of merger of the two churches. "Once you get beyond the prospect that we are talking about the merger of the two churches, people are quite receptive," observed Bishop Harry Shipps, retired bishop of Georgia.

Relations with Roman Catholics are murky

While a major breakthrough in relations with Lutherans looms, relations between Episcopalians/Anglicans and Roman Catholics are much more complicated.

A national and international dialogue that goes back to 1965 has stalled and "we simply don't know what to do next," Prof. William Franklin of The General Theological Seminary reported to the commission. As a participant in the dialogue, he said that "there is a perception that things are frozen in place, that no progress is being made."

Franklin contended that the recent papal encyclical is "forcefully committed to ecumenism" but Pope John Paul II does not seem to recognize how much progress has been made in the dialogues over the last 30 years. "We just don't seem to be on his map at this point--and that's not good."

"The sociological pressure for ecumenism is real," added Dr. Alma Marsh Morgan, especially as the Roman Catholics continue to close churches and lose priestly leadership. "The pressure is perking up from below."

"The laity is getting impatient--they don't understand the obstacles and restraints coming from above and they find it hard to accept the painful reality that we cannot share the Eucharist," added the Rev. Ashton Brooks of New York.

In a resolution, the SCER decided to ask Episcopal members of the dialogue with Roman Catholics in America to prepare a draft statement on "authority in the church," especially as it relates to "the authority of the baptized, the authority of bishops, and the authority of the universal primate," the pope. "The statement should describe the kind of universal primacy the Episcopal Church might find acceptable, helpful and consistent with its theological heritage."

95-1328

Church of England Synod struggles with sexuality document and reorganization

by James Solheim

(ENS) Opening the sixth General Synod of the Church of England on November 28, Queen Elizabeth II called attention to the "painstaking care" with which the synod had tried in the past to "accommodate and hold together people of all opinions." She added that, "since its earliest days, the Christian Church has wrestled with issues where opinions are as deeply held as they are divided." And she expressed her hope that "your faith, friendship and common purpose will, I pray, be strong and durable as you show what St. Paul meant when he urged Christians to speak the truth to one another in love."

The agenda tested those bonds as the synod struggled with the implications of a report that urged tolerance of different lifestyles--and considered proposals for a drastic reorganization of church structures.

The day the synod prepared to debate the controversial report, "Something to Celebrate," that argued everyone should find a place of welcome in the church, no matter what their sexual lifestyle, it heard a warning from a senior ecumenical leader.

Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, said that many churches were "deeply divided and even threatened in their unity in the face of conflicts about the ethics of life, of procreation and sexuality." He warned that the "unity of the church and the quality of its life as an inclusive community" were at stake.

Church must affirm family life

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey strongly attacked the study document because it had not focused clearly enough on the traditional family. He said that the report left the impression that "no single form of the family" was a God-given ideal. While the church should "serve people with humility and respect, whatever their circumstances," he added that "this does not diminish the wisdom and truth of the Christian tradition that a married man and woman and their children should be the basic building blocks for family life." Severed from lifelong total commitment, "sexual activity becomes potentially destructive, the source of untold pain, indignity and social breakdowns," Carey contended.

The synod passed an amendment affirming the church's belief in marriage while noting the variety of family relationships.

Bishop Jim Thompson of Bath and Wells, one of the chief authors of the report, reminded synod members that it was intended for study, not as an official

teaching, and argued that it reflected the reality of inner city life.

Reorganization plan proceeds

A proposal to drastically streamline the governing mechanisms of the church survived some stiff opposition and will be revised and returned for further debate next February.

The Turnbull Commission, named for its chair, Bishop Michael Turnbull of Durham, proposed a National Council with broad executive powers under the leadership of the archbishops of Canterbury and York. "Leadership, policy direction and strategic and executive responsibility are too fragmented and weak," Turnbull said during the debate. "The church at the national level clearly needs to work better as one body, not as some kind of dismembered jellyfish. Staying as we are and trying to tread water is not an option," he said.

Others challenged the proposals for what they perceived as too much centralization. "Are we moving towards a powerful center that will not need to listen to what the parishes are saying and will not hear the voices of the people in the pews?" asked Canon John Stanley of Liverpool, expressing the fears of a "top-down" church. Attempts to slow the process, however, failed by a vote of 239 to 167 but there was enough opposition to suggest that the final proposals will be modified to insure grassroots support.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95-1329

Women's ordination controversy simmers in Church of England, but causes no mass exodus

by James Solheim

(ENS) The ordination of women by the Church of England appears not to have caused the feared mass exodus of Anglican priests to Rome.

During a recent visit to Portugal and Spain, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey made it "very clear that there is no rush of people" leaving the Church of England in the wake of its January, 1994, vote to ordain women to the priesthood.

Citing earlier predictions that as many as 4,000 priests would leave the church,

Carey said that "the number is about 250 at the present time--and the majority of these are elderly and not all of them have become Roman Catholics." And he pointed out that "spiritual journeys can go either way. We know Roman Catholics who become Anglicans."

In the United States, by comparison, 98 Episcopal priests--63 of whom were married--have been ordained as priests in the Roman Catholic Church since 1981, the national Office of Ministry Development reported recently. During the same period, 251 priests were received by the Episcopal Church from the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Despite the obvious differences between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church, Carey argued that the relationship between the two has become deeper and warmer in recent decades. The two communions "are not at war with each other," he said, adding, however, that "no church or denomination can avoid the challenge of the ordination of women to the priesthood."

A different voice

Still, opponents to women's ordination in the Church of England continue to voice grave concerns about the long-term impact. One of the three "flying bishops" appointed to minister to those in the Church of England who are unable to accept women in the priesthood said that the church's General Synod made a mistake when it cleared the way for the ordination of women to the priesthood.

Parishes could force a reversal of the decision and sweep away the synod's "silly decision," Bishop Edwin Barnes said in a recent BBC radio interview. "What we've done we can undo," he said. "We are in a phase, not of reception, but of discernment and that means discerning what is right and what is wrong."

Barnes, who said that he was still convinced that "women were incapable of being priests," cited the example of the Lutheran Church in Latvia which recently suspended the ordination of women.

At the same time there are signs that even opponents to women's ordination may be modifying their views. Bishop Richard Chartres, recently chosen as the bishop of London, said in an interview with the *Church Times* that he supports women in the priesthood "with enthusiasm," though he himself will not ordain them as anything other than deacons. He added that "it is my responsibility and determination that the diocese should be a place where people can flourish and their ministries can develop."

Chartres added, however, that he did not regard the question of ordination as closed, adding that "we are a world-wide church and it is especially important at times of great change that we keep in touch with apostolic teaching and with the church throughout the world."

Vatican hardens position on ordination

Meanwhile, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recently issued a three-page statement clarifying the letter that Pope John Paul II issued last year. The letter was a response to the ordination of women by the Church of England.

The papal letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, presented itself as a teaching but it did not claim infallibility. In it the pope concluded that "the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitively held by all the church faithful."

Ratzinger's statement, however, says that the papal letter belongs to the deposit of faith and is a teaching that "has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal magisterium," the teaching authority that has evolved throughout church history.

"To understand that this is not violent or discriminatory toward women, you must consider that the priestly ministry is a service and not a position of power or privilege above others," Ratzinger wrote.

An editorial in the English Roman Catholic magazine, *The Tablet*, said that the clarification was made because "the Vatican sees the slowly increasing level of controversy over the possibility of women priests as a threat to unity within the communion of the Catholic faith that has to be countered forcefully."

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95-1330

Catholic supporters of women's ordination call for "discipleship of equals"

by Sally Bucklee

(ENS) As the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops began its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in mid-November, over a thousand Catholics from North America and 17 other countries assembled nearby--but with a decidedly different agenda. In the 20th gathering of the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC), they met to push the issue of ordaining women to the Catholic priesthood into ever broader arenas.

Their vision called for a fully inclusive ministry in a fully reformed faith community, modeled after the early church prior to the rise of a cultic priesthood.

The conference's opening ritual was a moving, two-and-a-half-hour celebration in music, dance and word of "20 centuries of women being church in the Roman Catholic tradition." The list presented of "witnesses" throughout the ages was long and impressive--and those raised up as modern saints were obviously and deeply loved by the audience.

Among those honored were Sr. Theresa Kane, who stunned the world in 1978 when she officially welcomed Pope John Paul to the United States in the name of all Catholic women by politely asking him to open up the church to women at all levels. Sr. Carmel McEnroy received the loudest and longest acclaim. A tenured professor of systematic theology, she was fired recently by St. Meinrad Seminary for signing a petition calling for dialogue on women in the priesthood, a subject banned by the pope in May, 1994. (That ban caused WOC membership to double to over 12,000.)

Amid many women speakers were four prominent male priests who came on stage together to tell their stories: Charles Curran, a leading Roman Catholic theologian who was dismissed from Catholic University because he disagreed with the church's teaching on artificial contraception; Anthony Padovano, who chose family life over celibacy and currently is president of the National Association for a Married Priesthood; Bill Callahan, silenced by the Vatican on the subject of women's ordination and later expelled from the Jesuits; and author Matthew Fox, repeatedly silenced by the Vatican and now an Episcopal priest. Several more Catholic priests and two bishops were in the audience.

Theological cornerstone

A presentation by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Krister Stendahl professor of divinity at Harvard Divinity School and renowned author, offered the theological cornerstone for the conference. Fiorenza is convinced that "equal ordination is the test case, but that unconditional prerequisites for women considering ordination are the transformation of a celibate priesthood, a hierarchical church, a male-clerical theology" and what she said is now a "woman-free zone." Otherwise, she said, ordination means "sub-ordination" in a denomination entrapped by "Caesar's imperial structures."

Fiorenza said she sees her vision of a "discipleship of equals" as an active process that has been "under way in world Catholicism for most of this century." Reassuring her audience that "we are not the first to do this and we are not alone," Fiorenza said, "There is a great cloud of witnesses throughout the centuries.... Struggle is indeed a name for hope."

Forty-five panels and numerous presentations offered diverse ways to explore a paradigm shift toward a discipleship of equals, concentrating on the positive aspects

of that vision rather than what is wrong with the patriarchal paradigm.

Yet within days the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith hardened Rome's ban against women in the priesthood by declaring its position to be a definitive and unquestionable part of church doctrine (see separate article). While making it virtually impossible for a future pope to reverse its stance, the Congregation stopped short of declaring the position infallible.

--Sally Bucklee, a member of the Episcopal Church's Executive Council, served as a panelist at the Women's Ordination Conference to share the Episcopal experience with women in the priesthood and episcopacy.

95-1331

Nominating Committee for Presiding Bishop develops criteria for office

by James Solheim

(ENS) The Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of a Presiding Bishop developed broad criteria for the office at its third working session in Florida, November 17-19.

"The committee has a strong sense of community--and we are excited about what the church is asking us to do," said Bishop Cal Schofield of Southeast Florida, co-chair. "We are moving along at a rapid rate, covering a lot of ground to meet our mandate." He added that the committee meetings are undergirded by worship, which has helped committee members to be "very open to God's call."

Kathy Tyler Scott of Indianapolis, the other co-chair, agreed that the committee was proceeding with a strong sense of its task. "We are working diligently and prayerfully in our efforts to prepare the church for this important decision," she said. "Our task is to help the church improve the quality of its decision."

The committee hopes that a final list of candidates will be developed at its meeting in California in March, 1996. So far, the committee has received 29 names in response to its initial mailing inviting recommendations from General Convention deputies, bishops and other church leaders.

Admitting that the list of criteria is somewhat daunting, she pointed out that there is clear acknowledgement that the presiding bishop is first and foremost a human being. "The choice of leadership in the church should not be disconnected with

support for those leaders," she said.

Extensive criteria for a difficult job

Citing the church's canons, the committee underscored the requirement that the presiding bishop "shall be the chief pastor and primate of the church." The canons also say the presiding bishop is "charged with responsibility for leadership in initiating and developing the policy and strategy of the church and, as chair of the Executive Council of General Convention, with ultimate responsibility for the implementation of such policy and strategy through the conduct of policies and programs" authorized by the church.

The presiding bishop should also "speak God's words to the church and to the world, as the representative of this church and its episcopate in its corporate capacity."

Other criteria for the office call for a person:

- whose life is grounded in Scripture and prayer and reflects a depth of spirituality, rooted in grace;
- who nurtures the people of God in servant ministry;
- who receives and articulates the on-going revelation of God from which the vision of the church can be discerned;
- who will be aware of the power of the office, confident with that power and willing to use it for the greater glory of God through the church and the empowerment of others;
- who is a capable administrator and delegator;
- who will work for unity in the context of the Baptismal Covenant;
- who will be a disciplined steward of personal life, taking time for self and family;
- who will exercise leadership with authority and compassion, recognizing its substantive and symbolic nature.

The committee also finalized a questionnaire for potential nominees covering areas of personal life, leadership and theology and considered materials to be sent to those who are on the list.

Additional nominations are sought until January 15. Nomination forms are available from the committee secretary, Russell Palmore, Jr., P.O. Box 1122, Richmond, VA 23208.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95-1332

Russian Orthodox patriarch reaffirms ties to Episcopal Church

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) The close relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Russian Orthodox Church was strongly reaffirmed during a recent meeting in Moscow of the joint coordinating committee established in 1989 to promote cooperation between the two churches.

At a gathering of more than 50 Russian metropolitans and bishops, attended by the committee, Patriarch Alexy II made a forceful statement of his appreciation for the assistance of the Episcopal Church, especially in the area of social ministry.

"The patriarch was forthright in welcoming our ECUSA delegation as the Russian Orthodox Church's closest ecumenical partners in his welcome, toast and speech," reported Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee, Episcopal chair of the committee. "The patriarch left no doubt of his deep commitment to this close relationship."

Given a mood among some Russian Orthodox bishops of animosity toward the proselytizing efforts of other denominations, the ringing endorsement at such an event was "deeply appreciated," said the Rev. David Perry, national ecumenical officer. The patriarch stressed that "the Episcopal Church is opposed to proselytism, that our relationship is a model of real ecumenical relations," Perry said.

Possible dialogue on ecclesiology discussed

The committee includes three members from each church appointed by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and the patriarch, as well as national ecumenical officers. During its business session, members developed initial plans for a possible theological dialogue on ecclesiology to be held in early 1997 in Russia. Two earlier dialogues were held on the subjects of the episcopacy and evangelism. In his comments, Patriarchy Alexy expressed his hope that Browning might visit Russia in 1997, perhaps as part of such a meeting.

Browning traveled to Russia early in his term as presiding bishop, and the patriarch expressed his desire to "have him come at the end of his term" to give the patriarch an opportunity "to say farewell and to express gratitude for his partnership," Perry said.

The committee discussed possible exchanges of faculty and students between Episcopal and Orthodox seminaries, and raised the possibility of having Russian students attend the Episcopal Youth Event in Indiana in 1996.

In visits to various departments of the Orthodox Church, the Episcopal

committee members met with chairs of the departments of external affairs, Christian education, charity, armed forces, and mission and evangelism. Archbishop Sergius of the Department of Charity underscored in particular his thanks for the assistance of the Diocese of New York, Perry said.

Episcopal members of the committee, who are appointed by the presiding bishop, are White, the Rev. Canon Robert Wright of General Theological Seminary, and Suzanne Massie of Blue Hills, Maine. Archbishop Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk, and Valery Chukalov and Elena Speranskaya, staff members of the department of external affairs, represent the Orthodox Church.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.



news briefs

95-1333

Church group claims police tortured Guatemalan street children

(ENI) Guatemala's government permits the "systematic use of torture by police agents against street children," according to a report recently presented to the United Nations Commission Against Torture. The report was made by Casa Alianza, the Latin American program of the Roman Catholic charity Covenant House, which shelters street children in several countries. The report gave details of 33 cases of violence or torture involving 59 children, which occurred between March, 1990, and October, 1995. Sixteen of the children affected died as a result of the torture, and two children who testified as witnesses were later killed. Casa Alianza's executive director, Bruce Harris, said responsibility for the violence against the children was slowly shifting from agents of the national police to private security forces. Harris warned of "a dramatic increase in [murder] and torture by private police," adding that the government had failed in its responsibility to properly regulate the private forces. In recent years Casa Alianza has initiated more than 200 legal cases against those who abused street children, but Harris claimed fewer than 10 cases had been resolved and only then after "tremendous international pressure" from groups including Amnesty International. "The rest of the cases have been filed away, lost, or simply ignored," Harris said.

Swords into ploughshares program launched in Mozambique

(SAAN) Mozambique's churches recently launched a program enabling people to trade in their weapons for hoes, sewing machines or even tractors. Bishop Dinis Sengulane of Lebombo told the Standing Commission on Mission and Ministry in the Province of Southern Africa that the "Swords into Ploughshares" scheme was aimed at persuading people to exchange instruments of war for implements of production. Depending on the amount of weaponry handed in, people received anything from sewing needles to a tractor. The Christian Council of Mozambique was involved in persuading children to bring in their toy guns to be destroyed, he added. The commission called upon Anglicans in the five countries of the province to follow the example of the Mozambican church.

Tutu declares 'safer' landmines still unacceptable

(SAAN) Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa recently criticized a new South African government proposal to make "safer" weapons by developing "self-destructing and self-deactivating" anti-personnel mines. Addressing his diocesan council in Cape Town, he commended a recent government decision to introduce a permanent ban on the export or sale of "long-lived" anti-personnel landmines. But the proposal to replace them with "short-lived" or "smart" mines was "just not good enough," he added. "Anti-personnel mines are an obscenity," he said. "They maim or kill unarmed women and children and civilian non-combatants in contravention of hallowed conventions, and they make normal life impossible where they have been installed." Tutu declared that the government must be called on "for a total ban on the production, manufacture, stockpiling and trade of all anti-personnel landmines." The archbishop's clash with the government on the issue has its roots in a conference on landmines organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Harare, Ethiopia, in March, where he spoke out strongly against the weapons.

President of New York church council vows to battle budget cuts

(ENS) "I have a real concern that our society, and the city and state governments have turned their backs on those who need them the most--children, women, the poor, people with AIDS," declared the Ven. Michael S. Kendall, archdeacon of the Diocese of New York, at a ceremony instituting him as the new president of the Council of Churches of the City of New York. "All this is being done with a false sense of what is sacred. The budget has now become god, and balancing the budget has become sacred," he said. Noting that the intention of budgets and governments should be to serve those who cannot help themselves, he criticized the city and state for shirking their responsibility to the poor and cutting back resources for community and church groups who struggle to make up the difference. "The churches in New York City are responding to the needs of the poor, because the government is failing to do so," he said. The government has given resources to the churches to help us fill in the gaps, but now the government is taking away those resources also."

Giving rises, attendance falls in Church of England

(CT) Despite the revelation in 1992 of a loss of 800 million pounds in assets by the Church Commissioners and a 3 percent decline in attendance between 1992 and 1993, figures recently released in the booklet *Church Statistics 1995* show that total giving to parochial church councils in the Church of England went up in every diocese in that time period. The booklet's forward warns that the 1993 figures are from a time when the extent of the damage to the Church's assets was not fully

known, but it said that the prospects were encouraging. Jonathan Prichard, diocesan secretary in Chichester, said that the diocese was "thrilled that, by our own calculations, voluntary giving has gone up by 8 percent, and covenanted giving by 12 percent. The whole crisis has led to explaining more. Church folk tend to be mature people, and they go for it. I think that where the faith is strong the money follows."

Faith & Values channel breaks 25 million subscriber mark

(ENS) The Faith & Values channel (F&V) announced recently that it has broken the 25 million subscriber mark and has become the eighth fastest growing ad-supported cable network of the 32 monitored by the A.C. Nielsen company. According to Nielsen People Meter universe estimates for November, 1995, F&V gained 4.5 million homes over the last 12 months, a 19 percent increase. F&V's average audiences, cumulative audience and number of reportable half-hour programming blocks all increased dramatically in October, the start of a new season that saw the debut of 15 new series on F&V. "The Faith and Values Channel is increasingly seen, by both cable operators and their viewers, as a valuable source of values-based, family-oriented and religious programming that both entertains and feeds the spirit," said Nelson Price, F&V's CEO. "The momentum we have built over the last year is a direct result of the growing realization by cable system affiliates that F&V satisfies a real desire among their viewers for a wholesome and engaging alternative that helps guide their search for meaning in life, particularly the now-mature Baby Boomer generation," Price said. "F&V complements and rounds out a diverse cable system channel line-up."

Queen makes ecumenical gesture by attending Catholic service

(ENI) Queen Elizabeth II, who is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, made a bold gesture of ecumenism recently by attending a full Roman Catholic service for the first time. It is also believed to be the first time a British monarch has officially attended a Roman Catholic service since the 1689 constitutional settlement entrenched the Protestant Reformation. Queen Elizabeth vowed at her coronation to defend the "Protestant Reformed Religion." The Queen attended vespers at Westminster Cathedral on November 30 to mark the cathedral's centenary. Mass was not said. Queen Elizabeth was greeted by Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, and she sat at the front of the nave on a specially carved rosewood chair.

Churches in Finland and Iceland back Porvoo

(LWI) The Lutheran churches in Finland and Iceland recently adopted the Porvoo Declaration. The synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland gave overwhelming approval at its meeting in November. Of the 106 votes cast, 96 were in

favor of the declaration, which links British and Irish Anglicans with Nordic and Baltic Lutherans. The Finnish synod stressed that the Porvoo Common Statement--the basis for the declaration--does not alter confession of the Finnish Church. After the pastors' synod of the National Church of Iceland had given unanimous approval to the Porvoo accord in June, the church assembly added its unanimous backing for the agreement in November. Ten of the 12 churches (eight Lutheran and four Anglican) involved have now endorsed the Porvoo agreement.

Ecumenical patriarch welcomed to Anglican Communion offices

(ANS) The Rev. Canon John L. Peterson, secretary general of the Anglican Communion, recently welcomed his All-Holiness Bartholomaos I, archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and ecumenical patriarch, to the Anglican Communion offices in London. In welcoming the patriarch, Peterson said, "Your All-Holiness, it is a deep privilege to welcome you to the secretariat of the world-wide Anglican Communion. To host this closing meeting between you and the spiritual leader of our Anglican family is a special occasion and honor for us all." During the afternoon, Bartholomaos I and his party took part in informal talks with Anglican ecumenical officers, the Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, Bishop Richard Chartres of London and Bishop Mark Dyer of Bethlehem, U.S.A. The informal talks focused on the work of the international dialogue, the question of the filioque, and environmental concerns. Both Bartholomaos I and Carey expressed their appreciation and confidence in the international Anglican/Orthodox dialogue and informal talks.

Australian church body rejects racist claims

(AN) The National Council of Churches of Australia (NCCA) recently rejected claims that plans to set up a separate, self-governing national church organization for Aboriginals amounts to 'apartheid.' The NCCA executive backed the plan for the new body which would replace the existing Aboriginal and Islander Commission which is under the control of the NCCA. NCCA general secretary Rev. David Gill admitted there were a "few people in the executive who said: 'Hey this sounds a bit like apartheid. We're supposed to be on about Christian unity. What are we doing contemplating some form of separation?'" But Gill said that after debate the executive agreed that there was a "world of difference" between the South African apartheid and the NCCA proposal. The difference, according to Gill, was between a separation that is used "to enforce a power position, and free space that is requested so that the powerless may discover themselves and by themselves make their own decisions." Gill believes the new body is envisaged not as a separation for all time, but "as a provision of space at this point in the history of our nation."

Presiding bishop urges relief for Iraqi people

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning recently wrote to President Clinton urging him to "use your influence in the United Nations' Security Council to find a way to bring relief to the Iraqi people." Browning wrote that he was "extremely disturbed by recent reports that international economic sanctions against Iraq are causing widespread malnutrition and death among the Iraqi population, especially children." In his letter, Browning noted to a recent Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report that more than 500,000 children have died as a result of the sanctions against Iraq. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), a coalition of religious denominations and organizations—including the Washington office of the Episcopal Church, sent a similar letter to Clinton. Both letters recognized the complicity of the Iraqi government in the crisis, but, the CMEP letter stated, the coalition could not "remain silent in the face of a policy which victimizes the most vulnerable citizens" of Iraq. The economic sanctions policy "has failed to modify the behavior of the Iraqi government, but rather has contributed to the death of children," the CMEP letter stated.

NCC's Campbell responds to criticism

(ENS) National Council of Churches' (NCC) general secretary, Joan Brown Campbell, recently responded to criticism from the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD) that accused the NCC of "employing rites of the Church for partisan political advocacy." The IRD criticism referred to a meeting at the White House during which NCC leaders "laid hands" on President Bill Clinton. "I want to register my surprise to learn that the IRD is critical of Christians praying," Campbell wrote. "There are many that will find a great irony in IRD's criticism of the National Council of Churches' prayer life. Others, no doubt, will wonder at IRD's self-appointment as a kind of 'prayer police.'" Brown pointed out that the main purpose of the church leaders' visit to the Oval Office had been to deliver to President Clinton the text of an NCC resolution urging him and Congress not to cut social welfare budgets. Brown said the meeting was not intended to take sides on the question of the difficulties the Democrat President is facing with a Republican-dominated Congress. "To suggest that the NCC was there [at the White House] to comfort the President and to criticize the Congress is disingenuous if not outrightly dishonest," Brown said in response to the IRD's criticisms.

Archbishop calls for women bishops

(EC) Speaking at a recent Melbourne diocesan synod, the Most Rev. Dr. Keith Rayner, archbishop of Melbourne and primate of Australia, called for women to

be consecrated as bishops. "It is a controversial issue, both within this church and ecumenically," Rayner said. "Nevertheless I have to say that the ordination of women to the episcopate is no more than a logical consequence of ordination of women to the priesthood. Now that we have women whose experience in priestly ministry makes them eligible for consideration, the General Synod should take the opportunity to open every order of ministry to women as soon as possible," he said. In the diocese of Melbourne there are 67 women priests and deacons, more than any other diocese in Australia.

Archbishop of Nigeria criticizes government

(CT) The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his fellow campaigners could mark "a farewell to dictatorship," Archbishop Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye said recently. According to a report in the Nigerian press, Adetiloye attacked the Nigerian government, predicting that in the future November 10 would be observed every year as a national holiday in memory of the activists. "Behind a frowning providence lies a smiling face," he said. "I hold and believe very strongly that the Almighty Creator is not on holiday. He is very much in control of events and situations throughout the world. The killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others may be part of the Almighty's own way of answering the prayer of Nigerians who have been praying night and day for peace and a return to democracy." The hangings, he said, were a "mockery of the judiciary, a travesty of justice, and callous use of judicial murder."

Evangelist Graham announces son will succeed him

(ENS) Billy Graham recently announced that his son, the Rev. Franklin Graham, will one day succeed him as chairman of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Foundation (BGEF). In the meantime, Franklin Graham will assume the new post of first vice-chairman of BGEF. The choice has been criticized mainly because Graham is not known as an evangelist, but also because he is said to have enjoyed drinking, smoking and fast cars as a youth, and he was expelled from university. In 1973 he underwent a spiritual conversion at his father's hands, and devoted himself to Samaritan's Purse, a charitable trust which delivers aid to war zones. He was ordained in 1981. In the last few years, he has started preaching at crusades.

Expert panel on Catholic law supports women as deacons

(ENS) The Canon Law Society of America (CLSA), a group of experts in Roman Catholic Law, recently concluded that the ordination of women as deacons in the church would be in keeping with Catholic theology and past practice. The study was approved by CLSA at its annual meeting in October in Montreal where the society concluded that "women have been ordained permanent deacons in the past, and it would be possible for the church to determine to do so again." Pope John Paul

II and the Vatican have refrained from ruling out ordination of women to the diaconate, even in major pronouncements against ordaining women to the priesthood. The study said that by the third century "there clearly were women deacons," adding that a majority of scholars, although not all, believe that these deaconesses were ordained and considered clergy parallel to men.

Browning urges Clinton to reexamine U.S. presence in Okinawa

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning recently sent a letter to President Clinton urging the president to call for a review of U.S. military presence on Okinawa. Browning wrote that the rape of a 12-year-old student in Okinawa, combined with the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, "might be occasions for our government to re-think its long-term security agreements in Japan." Browning also forwarded a message from the justice and peace committee of the Anglican Church in Japan. That statement declared that "many incidents which take human lives and human rights away have taken place not only during those 27 years of the U.S. military occupation, but also they have repeatedly happened during those 23 years since Okinawa was returned to Japan. When we see this reality, the rage grows up in our hearts against the governments of both Japan and U.S. and especially against the U.S. military bases which have kept those people victims."

Bishop calls for onslaught on England's urban deprivation

(ENI) A Church of England bishop has warned that Britain's inner cities are at a crisis point and has demanded an "onslaught" on deprivation by politicians, religious leaders and other decision-makers. The Bishop of Leicester, Tom Butler, was speaking after the recent publication of a report by the Church of England Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas. The report, *Staying in the City*, was published on the 10th anniversary of an earlier report by the Church of England, *Faith in the City*, which made 23 demands for government action, and which was denounced at the time by one cabinet minister as "Marxist theology." According to the new report, urban deprivation is "as bad if not worse" than a decade ago, with a concentration of severe need in the centers and outer estates of the biggest cities. Butler, the chairman of the advisory group, said that "numerous initiatives to regenerate our inner cities have had little tangible impact on the stark reality of deprivation. God has not forsaken the city, so nor must we as a church and as a nation." Despite the report's grim analysis, the bishop spoke of significant achievements since *Faith in the City* stirred Christians across the nation. The Church Urban Fund, for instance, had raised more than \$32 million for urban projects.

Gay activists win seats in Church of England's general synod

(ENI) Early results of recent elections to the Church of England's general

synod indicate that strong supporters of gay rights have gained several seats. An openly gay clergyman, Malcolm Johnson, has been elected to the synod by the Diocese of London. The neighboring Diocese of Southwark elected Jeffrey John, a clergy man who in his election address gave support to same-sex marriages. Another supporter of gay rights, Brian McHenry, was chosen by Southwark diocese as one of its lay representatives in general synod. In other dioceses, however, gay rights activists were failing to make headway, while the conservative evangelical vote made considerable gains, according to the *Church of England Newspaper*.

Canterbury Cathedral to add education center

(ENS) The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral have announced plans for construction of a comprehensive education center to be located within the precincts of the Cathedral. The initial phase of the project, which is expected to begin in 1996, will include a main auditorium for lectures, conferences and concerts; two audio-visual studios, exhibition areas and teaching spaces for school groups and the general public. "Each year over two and a quarter million people visit the cathedral to learn more about the history of Christianity and Canterbury's part in that history," said the Very Rev. John A. Simpson, dean of Canterbury. "The impressive history of the Cathedral provides an atmosphere which is highly conducive to learning."

Thousands of 'new faithful' join Cuban churches

(ENI) Churches in Cuba are now facing a situation similar to that encountered by the early Christians, when, according to the Bible, new faithful were added to the church every day. But, according to Rafael Cepeda, a Cuban historian and a member of the country's Presbyterian Reformed Church, Cuba's churches have been "caught unprepared to face the challenge" of rapid growth, with thousands of Cubans now attending church regularly. The growth comes after a long period following the Cuban revolution when churches had become used to a constant decline in membership. Many church members left the country, others abandoned the churches for ideological reasons or because they were afraid of losing their positions as students, employees or professionals due to their active Christian commitment.

Roman Catholic prior installed in Anglican Cathedral

(ENI) A Roman Catholic monk was installed recently at a Church of England cathedral in what is believed to be the first such gesture by Anglicanism since the 16th century Protestant Reformation. Dom Dominic Milroy of Ampleforth Abbey is the prior of Chester Cathedral--a Catholic "shadow" office that dates back to 1633, less than a century after the church was taken over by Anglicans. The pope at that time was unwilling to concede jurisdiction of the English cathedrals to Anglican deans, and created the parallel office of priors. The dean of Chester, Stephen Smalley

said that he saw the appointment as "a wonderful way of building ecumenical bridges. We prayed together and confessed our sin of disunity." He said there had been no disagreement in the chapter, or governing body of the cathedral, over the installation of Dom Dominic, although it is stressed that the post is nominal and involves no official duties. Dom Dominic, who is a former headmaster of the Benedictines' Ampleforth College, will be invited to teach at the cathedral, which was originally a Benedictine abbey. Dean Smalley rejected a suggestion that Dom Dominic might be tempted to lapse into Roman Catholic propaganda, saying he was "too intelligent a man" to misuse the occasion.

Anglican priest warns against withdrawing into 'holy huddle'

(ENI) Peter Breckwoldt, an Anglican vicar who has linked his parish to the global computer network, Internet, and helped organize one of England's first Christian Internet Conferences, recently described as "out of touch" remarks about the information superhighway by the former Anglican Archbishop of York, Lord Habgood. Habgood said in August that the Internet and the information revolution could become "devilish," ushering in a nightmare society with "a lot of self-centered individuals concerned only with their own fulfillment, sitting all day in front of their computer or television screens, and soaking their minds in increasingly violent and obscene entertainment." Breckwoldt acknowledged that people were "rightly concerned" about pornography and other unsuitable material that found its way onto the Net, but added that religious people must not withdraw and "form a holy huddle."

CDM releases figures on women presbyters, clergy conversions

(ENS) The Council for Development of Ministry (CDM) recently released statistics about the status of women presbyters in the Episcopal Church that show 18 percent of the priests with updated church deployment profiles are women. The Rev. James Wilson, executive director of the Church Deployment Office, said that Province I has the highest percentage of female priests, 24.2 percent, and Province VII has the lowest, 8.2 percent. He also said that the average current stipend for male priests is \$30,193, but only \$24,478 for females. The CDM report noted that a more accurate comparison might be made with male priests ordained after 1976, whose average current stipend is \$27,606, observing that this figure was "still significantly higher than females'."

Bishop warns against dangers of idolizing the Bible

(ENI) Bishop Richard Holloway of Edinburgh, primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, recently declared the Bible to be "a creature of its time" and not a complete guide to complex modern problems. He also warned fundamentalists against idolizing sacred writings. He called the New Testament a "creation of the church,"

pointing out that it "took several hundred years for the church to decide what to leave in and what to take out." Both the New and Old Testaments accepted slavery, he noted. Another example of what he called provisional status of moralities was the Old Testament's perception of women as the property of men. He said that "the beauty of the Bible is that it shows us a serious people seriously evolving appropriate moral structures for their day; so they give us confidence to do the same." He continued by pointing out that "the tragic thing about fundamentalism is that it takes genuinely important, even sacred things, things that have conveyed meaning and mediated the divine, and makes them into ends, absolutizes and objectifies them, turns them, in fact, into idols."

Rebuke for archbishop who compared church dissidents to Luther

(ENI) A senior Lutheran church leader in Austria recently accused a Roman Catholic archbishop of lacking an "ecumenical spirit" after the archbishop compared a radical petition being circulated by a Roman Catholic pressure group, *We are the church*, with the Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther. Among its demands, the petition calls for women priests in the Roman Catholic church, an end to obligatory celibacy for priests, and for bishops to be elected by lay people, as well as a "more humane church" and "acceptance of the value of sexual relationships." Archbishop Georg Eder of Salzburg said Martin Luther had "provoked schism in the church" by pasting his 95 Theses to the door of a Wittenberg church on the eve of All Saints Day in 1517. "Perhaps these latest five demands will be enough to produce the next schism," Eder said. In a letter to the archbishop, Johannes Dantine, an Oberkirchenrat (church executive) in Austria's Lutheran church, whose 340,000 members comprise up to 5 percent of Austrian citizens, said Luther's action had been intended not to split the church but to introduce "reforms which were necessary." Dantine added that recent papal documents had recognized the fault lay on "both sides" for past church divisions. "It would be damaging if the Sixteenth Century Reformation was used as a kind of threat in the Catholic church's latest internal struggles," Dantine said.

Church of Norway vetoes church service for gays

(ENI) The Church of Norway's general synod recently ruled that people in homosexual relationships cannot hold church positions. The synod of the Lutheran church, which met in Bergen, November 12-17, also decided that "it is not a subject of current interest to introduce a church prayer ceremony for homosexual/lesbian couples." The Church of Norway Information Service described debate on the issue as "emotionally charged." It said 58 of the 79 delegates voted to issue a statement declaring that the synod "does not find enough convincing theological reasons that the Church of Norway can change its present practice in regard to the appointment of individuals who live in homosexual cohabitation." The statement also said that the

Church of Norway found no grounds "to suggest any liturgical arrangement for a church intercessory ceremony for people who live together in a homosexual relationship."

Russian patriarch makes historic visit to Germany

(ENI) Patriarch Alexei II, the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, recently visited Germany on the first official visit to that country of a leader of Russia's largest church. The visit was also significant because it took place soon after the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Alexei described his visit as a "mission of good will and witness of reconciliation." He was invited to Germany by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the German (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Conference and the Russian Orthodox Church's German diocese, and had meetings with Germany's Protestant and Roman Catholic church leaders, as well as top government officials, including President Roman Herzog, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel. In an interview with the Russian information agency Novosti, Alexei said the Russian and German churches had made a major contribution to healing the scars left by World War II and to making peace between the two nations. "We have achieved a lot in this direction, even in the most difficult moments of the Cold War," he said.

WCC responds to agreement on former Yugoslavia

(ENI) The World Council of Churches (WCC) recently congratulated the leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia for their "willingness to compromise for the sake of peace" by signing an agreement to end the war in former Yugoslavia. "We recognize that the peace for which the peoples of Bosnia long is not fully secured but will require their intensive continuing efforts and the solidarity of many other nations," a statement issued by the WCC said. The organization repeated a call made by its central committee earlier this year for "constitutional guarantees for minorities, both individuals and communities" and for "multi-cultural and multi-ethnic formations" to be "encouraged and respected within every society." The WCC also commended President Bill Clinton for his "important initiative" in bringing about the agreement. The WCC has 330 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox member churches worldwide, including the Serbian Orthodox Church and two Protestant churches based in Serbia.

'Hate-free Bible' aims to undo centuries of bias

(ENI) The world's first Christian Bible that claims to be free of anti-Jewish bias was recently published in the United States by the American Bible Society (ABS). Known as the Contemporary English Version Bible (CEV), the project to

translate the whole of the Old and New Testaments has taken more than 100 scholars, theologians, translators and consultants 10 years to complete. Since the CEV was completed in June, 465,000 copies have been printed and nearly 150,000 have been distributed by the ABS. Both Jewish and Christian biblical scholars have conceded in recent decades that anti-Jewish bias exists in the New Testament. Some scholars have linked 1,800 years of Christian antipathy to Jews with the Holocaust. Christian sensitivity to anti-Jewish attitudes within the New Testament has grown as dialogue between Jews, Roman Catholics and Protestants has increased. But neither greater sensitivity nor political correctness was the reason for the translation, according to Barclay Newman, the ABS's senior translation officer. "Our concern was to produce a work as faithful to the original biblical text as possible ... that text should not do what it was not intended to do," Newman said. "A truly faithful translation of the New Testament requires that the translator should constantly seek ways in which false impressions may be minimized and hatred overcome," he said, saying that he had been guided by a statement in the Bible by St. Paul that Jesus came to make peace between Jews and Gentiles.

'Christian Europe is an illusion,' churches told

(ENI) Europe has ceased to be a Christian society, and Orthodox churches must bring back to Europe its Christian characteristics, said George Tssetsis, an Orthodox priest who represents the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva. Tssetsis was speaking at a meeting in Istanbul on the role of Orthodox churches in Europe in the 21st century. Tssetsis said that the idea of Christian Europe today is nothing but an illusion. Secularization has deeply penetrated European society, and science, technology, art, economy and state are now beyond the Christian realm, he said. "It is a sad reality that many people in Europe, including Christians, are no longer convinced of the values contained in the Christian heritage of Europe, and often view these values with reserve and even with indifference, if not hostility," Tssetsis said. "Many Europeans place their hopes for the future on technological progress. This is precisely why, at the twilight of the second millennium, Europe ceased to be a 'Christian society' as it used to be."

West Indies synod votes for women priests

(ENS) The Anglican Church of the Province of the West Indies (CPWI) recently voted for the ordination of women as priests at its synod in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The resolution attained the necessary two-thirds majority by separate resolution in each of the synod's three houses (bishops, clergy, and lay). The synod also passed resolutions dealing with subjects that ranged from concern over the environment to the human rights situation in Nigeria. One resolution expressed "grave concern" at the lack of information about arrangements Caribbean governments make

with international lending agencies, and called on the governments to be "alive to the disastrous effects [of such arrangements] suffered by Caribbean citizens."

Czech woman claims ordination as Catholic priest

(CNI) A 65-year-old Czech schoolteacher, Ludmila Javorova, recently claimed that she had been ordained and has served as a Catholic parish priest for more than 20 years. In an interview published in the Austrian magazine *Kirche Intern*, Javorova said that Bishop Felix Davidek ordained her in 1970 along with several other women, to serve the underground Catholic Church of Czechoslovakia. She also said that she later served as vicar general of the bishop's diocese until his death in 1988. According to Javorova, Davidek made the decision to admit women to the priesthood because imprisoned Catholic women were denied access to priests, since the Communist authorities would not allow men to visit women in prison. She said that he convened a diocesan synod before making his final decision to ordain women, and swore all participants to secrecy.

Dioceses elect new bishops, including sixth woman in U.S.

(ENS) Three dioceses recently elected new bishops, including a woman in the Diocese of Utah. The Rev. Carolyn Tanner Irish, staff associate for spiritual development at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., was elected bishop coadjutor of the diocese of Utah, becoming the sixth woman bishop in the United States Episcopal Church. Irish was elected on the fourth ballot. Bishop George Bates of Utah plans to retire sometime in mid-1996. Irish is scheduled to be consecrated on June 1, 1996. The Rev. Canon Robert William Duncan was elected bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Pittsburgh on the third ballot. He will succeed Bishop Alden Hathaway at his retirement on January 1, 1988. Duncan is canon to the ordinary in Pittsburgh. The Rev. Dr. Paul V. Marshall, associate professor at Yale Divinity School and acting director of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, was elected bishop of the Diocese of Bethlehem on the third ballot. His installation is scheduled for June 29, 1996.

People

Catherine Lynch was named assistant treasurer for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS). She will direct the investment activities of the DFMS. Most recently, she served in the finance department of the Soros Foundations, a group of foundations that supports democracy in eastern Europe, where she created and managed the foundation's budget process. She has also worked as deputy director of public policy at Gay Men's Health Crisis, the New York City office of management and budget, and as a stock market analyst for Prudential-Bache.

Anthony Perfetti was named controller for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS). He has served as controller or chief financial officer in a number of manufacturing companies and as a public accountant for Arthur Andersen. He is a volunteer at a men's homeless shelter and at a hospital cancer care unit. He will direct DFMS general accounting functions.

Bishop H. Irving Mayson, retired suffragan of Michigan, died on December 3 after a long illness.



news features

95-1334

Executive Council committee raises concerns about Church Pension Group management style

by Ed Stannard

(ENS) Every retired clergy person, every surviving clergy spouse and child, many lay employees and a large number of parishes are dependent on the Church Pension Group (CPG) for pensions and insurance.

So when questions arise about the \$2.6 billion corporation, lots of people get nervous.

On Oct. 24, Executive Council representatives met with leaders of the pension group to discuss concerns raised about the pension group's operation.

Voiced in letters from former employees, clergy and lay beneficiaries of the fund, and discussed in small groups at the recent House of Bishops meeting in Portland, the concerns address specific financial decisions affecting the pension fund, but also a general management style that critics claim is opulent.

Those concerns include the amount of some clergy and survivor pensions, the influence and involvement of the board of trustees in decision-making and management oversight, and the compensation and perquisites for top management. Also raised as concerns are CPG decisions to invest Church Pension Fund assets in other CPG affiliates, to forgive three quarters' of the annual pension assessment for clergy in a one-time gift, and to purchase new office space.

The Executive Council committee members and the CPG managers and trustees met in private, but the committee's chair, Dean M.L. Agnew, Jr., of Western Louisiana, and CPG President Alan F. Blanchard each met with reporters afterward. Both described the meeting as helpful in opening the lines of communication.

Blanchard said he had no problem meeting with the committee to answer concerns "because we're responsible for a ton of money and none of it is ours." He described the committee's visit as "halfway between collegial and challenging."

Agnew also called the session "time well spent," at least in raising the issues. "What we've begun will continue," he said.

The committee also produced a written report for the Executive Council.

Management salary and perks: "I think the item that is absolutely legitimate for discussion is compensation," Blanchard admitted. While he said he took a significant cut in pay to accept the CPG position, he said that "there's no question that the amount of money that I am paid ... is a sum of money that would appear huge to most ordained persons." Blanchard defended his "cash compensation," listed as \$464,100 in the CPG annual report, on the grounds that the fund needs to attract high-caliber managers that otherwise would go to the private sector. It is also difficult to compare the figure to compensation for other non-profit managers, he added, because the Church Pension Group is actually five companies. Some critics complained that salaries for top management weren't published in recent years and Blanchard admitted that "we made a mistake in taking the figures out" of the annual report. This year, they are back in.

Blanchard said he takes taxis to work and radio-dispatched cars home if he works late, not limousines as some have charged. Radio cars are also used to transport board members during meetings. But, he said, "I was shocked to see how much the bill was--it was too damn much. It will be a lot less next year."

Move to new quarters: The move in 1994 from leased space at 800 Second Ave. to office condos at 445 Fifth Ave. cost CPG \$17.5 million. CPG owns six floors of the building, including the first two, which are rented to retail stores.

Blanchard produced a purchase-vs.-lease comparison that shows that by 2007 the total operating cost will be \$1.9 million a year rather than \$3.2 million had CPG continued to lease. And at that point the building will be owned by CPG, whereas leasing costs would continue to increase.

However, according to the committee's report, Timothy Wittlinger pointed out that the comparison calculated the interest that would have been earned on the purchase money at 7 percent, rather than the 24 percent that the fund's portfolio earned last year. Therefore, the savings may have been overstated.

Forgiving three fiscal quarters of clergy assessments: A number of critics have claimed that CPG's 1994 moratorium on clergy assessments, which included additional life insurance for active and retired clergy and a \$50 million wellness program, was poor use of excess funds.

The ad hoc committee noted in its report that the decision was made mostly by a "kitchen cabinet" in two off-site meetings, keeping the information from the executive committee and full board until plans were complete. Blanchard "thought that members of the executive committee and the board in general would not keep news of this confidential," the report said.

Blanchard told the committee that he now would approach such a process differently, but defended the decision to offer a moratorium on payments. The excess reserve--the amount above that needed to fund pension obligations--was approaching \$300 million in 1994, he said, and there were fears among board members that General Convention would feel pressured to reduce the current assessment rate on clergy salaries permanently, which would have undercut the fiscal health of the pension fund. If CPG forgave the assessments, parishes could decide the best use of the excess money, Blanchard said.

"We thought that putting that decision back at the local level, rather than our making it for them, was an appropriate thing to do," he said.

The board's involvement in decision-making: The committee's questions indicated a concern that "the CEO has created a group of puppets" as a board of trustees, Blanchard said. A few board members may believe that, he admitted, and "there is no question similarly that there is frustration on the part of the board from time to time that they don't have time to deal with complex issues," particularly since the pension group covers "five different businesses, each highly regulated." But, he said, "the suggestion they would be a rubber stamp for anyone is extremely inappropriate and incredibly illogical."

Blanchard said the CPG is responsible to the wider church through a 25-member board of trustees elected by General Convention. Trustees may serve two six-year terms, and at least six of them are newly elected each convention. While new trustees receive a full day of orientation, that may not be enough given the complexity of the organization, Blanchard acknowledged. In recent years, the board has increased the number of its meetings and added three new committees, he said.

But Wittlinger pointed to the moratorium issue as an example of a decision-making process that at times seems to exclude most board members. "If I was on that board, I'd hit the roof," he said.

Pension inequities: One of the questions raised by bishops in their small groups at the Portland meeting asked: "What consideration is given to raising clergy pensions that are so minimal that they are below or at the poverty line? Amplification: Those priests who have worked 40 or more years in a small place with little pay and wind up with minimum pensions."

Blanchard produced a chart showing annual increases for those already retired--ranging from 3 percent to 7 percent--since 1991, but said that an increase in the basic formula for computing pensions would be much more expensive. Blanchard added that giving more to one group of people, "however deserving," could raise legal issues.

Transfer of funds between affiliates: Blanchard acknowledged that money from the Church Pension Fund has been invested in the Church Life Insurance Corp. and Church Insurance Co., two of CPG's subsidiaries. However, he said that the money, including \$25 million between 1991 and 1994 to Church Insurance, was not a transfer that depleted the pension fund in order to offset losses of the affiliates, but an investment that returns dividends and counts as pension fund assets.

"Those of us who are trustees of the fund are fiduciaries and if we made a [poor] investment, even in one of our own companies ... we could be subject to great penalties," he said.

What's next: In its written report to Executive Council, the committee noted that many of its questions were "fully answered and supported by data," but that other specific and more general questions remain. Phase Two of the dialogue is scheduled to take place Jan. 17, when the Executive Council committee will meet with the full board. Wittlinger said that the group will address systemic issues that he believes are the most important concerns.

For example, "a lot of people believe there should be some accountability beyond the board of the pension fund," Wittlinger said. Final recommendations from the committee will be presented in a report to Executive Council.

--Ed Stannard is news editor for *Episcopal Life*, the national newspaper for the Episcopal Church. James H. Thrall, deputy director of news and information, contributed to this article.

95-1335

Teleconference focuses on what's broken in U.S. politics

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) Alienation from the political process was the common theme when a senator, a bishop and the head of a citizens' lobbying group fielded questions from around the country in a teleconference on "The Broken U.S. Political System."

A project of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, the December 10 teleconference produced by the Episcopal Cathedral Teleconference Network drew

Senator Bill Bradley, New Jersey bishop Joe Doss and Ann McBride, president of Common Cause, into conversation on what ails American politics.

One caller from Missouri, identified as a woman named Terry who works with juvenile offenders, voiced a common frustration in getting key issues addressed by the political system. "We've tried and we've tried, and it's just not working," she said.

For far too many Americans, a politics "controlled by special interest groups" has ceased to "speak their language," said Bradley, a Democrat who is the senior senator of New Jersey. Bradley recently announced that he would not run for re-election, citing the brokenness of a system that no longer "speaks to people where they live their lives."

The church can play a special role in fixing that brokenness, Doss asserted. "Of course the church shares in the blame" by participating in the culture that shapes the system, Doss said. But at the same time, the church's "deeper identity, its identity rooted in Christ," means that it can present "a counter-culture, one that offers a different and better way," he claimed. "The church needs to develop a better public voice, and society needs to hear it."

Money is the root of all brokenness, maintained McBride as she raised up the plight of common citizens who feel "their voices are being drowned out by the money and power of special interests." Common Cause, with approximately 250,000 members, was founded in 1970 as a nonpartisan citizens' lobbying group that, among other issues, has pushed strongly for campaign finance reform.

With campaign reform, the field might be leveled in political elections so that challengers to incumbents would stand a better chance of getting elected, McBride suggested. The result, she said, would be a Congress with a more diverse membership that better reflects the diversity of America.

Event reaches across the country

In addition to an audience of more than 60 people who gathered in a studio of New Jersey public television in Newark, thousands more participated in the dialogue from 44 downlink sites around the country. Neil Upmeyer, editor of the political journal, *New Jersey Reporter*, served as moderator.

A sign of the mistrust in politics that is prevalent among Americans, Bradley said, is "the giant ear" he said opened up among the rank and file when he announced he would not run for re-election. He said as a non-candidate he has been able to focus more directly on "hearing what's on people minds" and giving them voice.

He downplayed reports that he has been in conversation with other disaffected national politicians about forming an independent political party. While he has talked with friends about what seem to be the major issues confronting the country, he said the significance of those conversations was "blown a little bit out of proportion" by the media.

A profound economic transformation in which advancing technology makes businesses more efficient, but can make workers obsolete, has created a new level of anxiety in people faced with losing their jobs, he maintained. A political system that worked, he argued, would address that.

A time to get involved

All three speakers called for increased engagement in the political process and community service by common citizens, and especially for early involvement by youth. Youth may be able to "recapture politics as a good word," Doss said, suggesting the model of "servant leader" for politicians that could begin with an expectation of community involvement.

In contrast to "politics that is elected," youth and other citizens can have a hand in addressing society's needs by "stepping forward to assume responsibility" through community action, Bradley said. In order to help "a kid who can't read, who needs a mentor, or to clean up a park that's full of spare tires," society needs to "unleash that gift of giving in millions of people," he said.

"You don't have to do something on an international scale to get involved," McBride agreed. Common Cause was "founded on the notion that one person can make a difference, and if we join together, we can make a bigger difference," she said.

During a 10-minute break in the middle of the 90-minutes teleconference, the studio audience as well as audiences at the downlink sites were asked to discuss three questions about encouraging involvement in common political goals, and making politics more relevant to the lives of common people.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95-1336

Episcopal bishop of Southwest Virginia returns sacred land to Monacan Indians

by **Bill McKelway**

(ENS) In a poignant mountainside ceremony that seemed to reverse the country's very beginnings, an Episcopal bishop recently restored sacred lands to one

of Virginia's most historically oppressed Indian tribes.

Telling scores of Monacan Indians that "we must be God's people together," Bishop Heath Light of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, said that the church and tribe share a bond that "means more than a piece of paper."

In presenting a deed of gift to Monacan chief Kenneth Branham, the bishop ended nearly a century of church control over a small tract of mountain land that Monacans hold sacred. The gift, he said, "comes out of a sense of respect for the land and for you who honor this land."

The Monacans are one of eight tribes recognized in Virginia, with more than 700 members, many of them in Maryland and other states, on tribal rolls. The tribe, citing the land's spiritual importance to them, petitioned the church two years ago for its return, a transfer believed to be unprecedented in Virginia, Light said.

While the gift involves a mere seven-acre tract bordering a mission church founded in 1908, the property has always been considered the spiritual nexus of Monacan efforts to re-establish their identity. Included within the tract is a tiny, 150-year-old, log-sided school house where Indian children were relegated to no more than an elementary school education.

"Most of us never even finished that because we had to go to work on the farms," said Parker Willis, now 71, who returned for the tribe's annual homecoming and the deed ceremony. Like many of his kinsmen, Willis used the trip to apply formally for tribal membership and to donate money to tribal causes.

Long-time residents of area

Chief Branham said he found it ironic that the gift comes only two days before most Americans celebrate Columbus day. "This will be known as Monacan day," he said.

Recognized by the state as a tribe only six years ago, Monacans in fact have populated the Amherst area for thousands of years. Reduced to little more than serfs and treated as castaways by area residents for generations, the Monacans relied on the church to sustain them spiritually and often physically.

"The church was really all there was in terms of celebration and development," said John Haraughty, a church representative who worked and lived among the Monacan for more than 20 years. "It was very difficult back then for anyone to even acknowledge they were Indian."

In the past five years, though, Monacans have been trying to reestablish a stronger sense of identity outside the church.

"The church was important for many years because we weren't ready as a people to go out on our own," said Kenneth Branham, 42, who is among the tribe's first high school graduates.

Spiritual leader George Whitewolf said that many tribal members still liken

Light's appearance to "a papal visit." But he said the church will take on a new role now that is less controlling.

"As the tribe grows, we could actually see the church begins to grow again too," said Whitewolf, who created an Indian altar beside the truck bed that served as a dais.

Some tribal members are wary that the church's diminished presence will be harmful. "I am glad to see the land come back to our people, but it is very important that we keep a relationship with the church," said Hattie Belle Hamilton. "We must not lose touch with God."

--Reprinted with permission from the Richmond Times-Dispatch newspaper. Bill McKelway is a Times-Dispatch staff writer.

95-1337

Diocese of Colorado explores Episcopal version of Promise Keepers gathering of men

by Schuyler Totman

(ENS) "How much does it cost to rent a football stadium?"

It is not a question that Jerry Winterrowd, Episcopal bishop of Colorado, is quite ready to ask.

It's too soon to tell if a movement is in the making, but on the first weekend of October, 155 Episcopal men ascended to the YMCA of the Rockies Camp near Estes Park, Colorado, to "see if I could open up to other men without passing out," as one participant quipped.

"It was very moving. I was overwhelmed by a tremendous spirit of emotion and passion," said Winterrowd, who initiated the event which he believes is the first event of its kind in the Episcopal Church.

Although he has never attended a Promise Keepers event, Winterrowd credits the conservative, Colorado-based Christian organization that draws together thousands of men with inspiring him to initiate the conference.

"I admired what they had done," said Winterrowd, "and I thought, 'By God, we should have one.' Here we are, a mainline denomination, trying to learn from them, and we are not embarrassed to do that."

Rededicating lives

By focusing on the prayer of rededication from the Book of Common Prayer, the conference challenged participants to re-examine the vows they had made at baptism and confirmation--and then to commit to them again. These vows were discussed in detail in small groups, which placed men from the same church and ZIP code together to help continue the community formed at the conference.

"Our essential theme was our commitment as baptized Christians, and how we work that out in the world, in our families, in our business life," Winterrowd said. "But in addition, we wanted to give the men a platform where they could share with one another. We wanted to allow the participants themselves to determine the flavor of the event."

"It was a home run, a great experience," said Jay Crouse, who travelled from Florida to participate in the event.

"The spiritual part of our group was amazing. We really got down to the nitty-gritty," Crouse added. "I wrote my bishop as soon as I got back about starting an event like it in our diocese."

In addition to small groups, workshops were offered on such topics as starting men's support groups and single parenting. The weekend also emphasized lay leadership.

"We wanted to give the clergy a chance to relax in fellowship, without the burden of being leaders," noted Tom Branch, director of the conference planning team, which began meeting in May.

"The clergy and lay participants had the opportunity to interact and support one another as peers. There was no perception of hierarchy, although the clergy did wear crosses on their nametags to let others know they were available to hear confession," said participant Timothy Chambers. And Winterrowd and the other clergy also received special attention in the form of laying on of hands and prayer for their ministries.

Serving as godly examples

According to Chambers, the conference also served to "remind men of their role as godly examples. They can't leave the demonstration of faith up to the other members of their family. The perception used to be that wives and children were the only ones who went to church."

While diocesan events for women are plentiful, Winterrowd noticed that very few were offered for men. "Men need a place where they feel safe to talk about their faith, their needs, their struggles. And women are very supportive. I went to a women's event earlier this year, and they prayed for the success of the conference," he said.

Tom Riley, conference speaker and president of the Christian ministry *Faith*

Alive, said that he was impressed with the conference and hoped other dioceses would show interest. Members of the conference planning team are available to assist others who want to plan a similar event.

--Schuyler Totman is a writer and publications designer for the Diocese of Colorado.

95-1338

Statement of the Presiding Bishop on the Federal Budget

I call upon the President and leadership of the House and Senate to speedily and compassionately come to a resolution of their differences on the federal budget. Hundreds of thousands of federal workers wait anxiously. Millions of Americans are watching.

As one of those Americans, I am discouraged by what I see. The angry speeches, staged press events, and hard-line posturing serve only to divide us, and to demoralize us. It may only be a carefully orchestrated performance in Washington, but the time has come to lower our voices, listen, and pursue common ground. We need much more civil discourse, and much less divisive speech-making.

I fervently hope that compassion and civility will extend to our policy choices, as well. The looming debate over the federal budget will show our true colors as a nation. Will we abandon our commitment to those who are poor? Will we restrict health care to some children and the elderly? A hungry child is no recipe for a balanced budget. Neither is a family plunged into poverty. Neither is an immigrant who is denied essential services. Neither is a mother who cannot find employment.

I recognize that this nation must make some tough choices as it brings its budget into balance. The government simply cannot do all that we wish it could. The Church's tradition of good stewardship with God's resources guides us to make choices that are just and responsible. I am deeply concerned that some of the choices being proposed in Washington are neither just nor responsible. I hope that we, in our daily lives and in our budget debates, will uphold the principle of treating others as we would like to be treated -- with compassion, respect, and dignity.

Edmond L. Browning
Presiding Bishop and Primate
November 15, 1995

95-1339

National Council of Churches declaration on proposed federal spending priorities and their effect on vulnerable families, the elderly and children

As people of earnest faith, we are called to stand with those in our nation who are poor and to seek justice on their behalf. As we are accountable to the God who gave life to all, we cannot remain silent! This is central to our sacred scriptures, faithful teachings and religious tradition.

We are deeply offended when proposed policies of our government turn away from the needs of people who are poor. We challenge every decision to eliminate federal programs that would thereby result in damage to children, the capacity of their parents to care for them, and the moral well-being of our nation as a whole.

Currently the Congress and the Administration are seeking ways to reduce the federal deficit, through a strategy which has as one component the dismantling of the nation's welfare system and the provisions for the elderly. While we recognize the need for welfare reform, many of the proposals offer a budget in balance and leave the lives of vulnerable people further out of balance. Provisions of health care, housing, nutrition, direct monetary assistance and other forms of aid, appropriate in a caring society, would be reduced or eliminated. Tested by our biblical faith, such proposals are unacceptable!

For the past six decades, our nation has committed itself to being a decent society. We have together sought to create a basic social minimum to maintain adequate standards of health and viable life for every person. We believe such a commitment is an essential mark of a responsible nation. It is exactly this commitment to the so called "safety net" that is in jeopardy and may be abandoned altogether. Again, we say "Unacceptable!"

The moral vision that claims us has led us to craft a society committed to providing for and protecting the poor, the vulnerable, the children, the elderly, the strangers in our midst. In such a vision, our nation is more than the sum of its states or the variety of its nationalities, races, age groups and religions. It is a common life touching all for the common good.

It is a covenant of Americans with one another of which our national government is both guardian and agent. In fulfilling that mandate, we must at least maintain minimal standards for the safety of every child, regardless of the state of life or the family circumstance in which they chance to be born, and we must uphold fair and just opportunities for the life of every child to be happy, productive and good. Such a commitment lies at the heart of a compassionate and responsible society. It is just such a covenant that now stands threatened.

When government priorities serve military interests at the expense of family life; establish programs of assistance for the native-born from which the foreign-born are excluded; take food and health care from the destitute, especially children and the elderly, to provide tax advantage for those already well off; pit generation against generation, and play ethnic groups against one another for crass political advantage, the democratic contract is rebuffed. Appallingly, in the name of balancing the budget, the moral vision is discarded.

Therefore the General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., assembled in Oakland, Calif., Nov. 15-17, implores the President of the United States, in the name of human decency and our earnest faith, to veto any legislation that further diminishes the lives of those in need, erodes the basic social covenant or seeks to balance the budget at further expense to those already vulnerable.

We urge the President and the Congress to reject any budget agreement or welfare bill that would:

- end the entitlement to cash or nutrition assistance, health care or social services for vulnerable children, families and individuals who are poor or have handicapping conditions;
- Deny benefits to naturalized citizens that are available to native born citizens of similar economic status;
- reduce resources available to Native American people;
- withhold benefits from children on account of the circumstances of their birth;
- allow states to abandon or reduce their commitment of resources for the elimination of poverty;
- require parents to attend school or go to work without providing adequate child care, education, training and job placement assistance; or
- narrow the door of welcome to those who come from beyond our shores and our provisions for their decent life among us.

And further, we urge support for the guardianship of our basic social covenant expressed in such presidential actions.

November 15, 1995

95-1340

Presiding Bishop's statement on President Clinton's peace initiatives in Ireland and Bosnia

I want to congratulate President Clinton for the risks he is taking for peace in Ireland and Bosnia. When he addressed the huge and enormously appreciative crowd in Belfast, he commended the Irish people's yearning for peace by invoking Scripture when he said "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth."

The President, too, has taken on the noble cause of peacemaking. I can think of no greater mantle for the President of the United States to wear than that of peacemaker. It brings honor to him and to the United States. And it is my prayer that such will be his legacy. Our country has been searching for its proper role in the wake of the end of the cold war and I think the President has discovered part of that role.

I am among those who begged the President to take steps to end the atrocities in Bosnia. He has now done that with determination and high purpose. My gratitude to him is for lifting up moral values in shaping his policy in Bosnia and Ireland. While he points to U.S. interests, it is the moral part of his argument that is compelling and right.

There will be those who oppose the use of troops in a conflict overseas. And I, too, have been in that position for a long time. The President has proven himself right in keeping troops out of Bosnia until a peace agreement has been reached. Now it is worth the risk for U.S. troops to maintain and implement a peace already made. The world could not bear any longer to allow the atrocities of that conflict to continue. I am so relieved to see the end of that repugnant practice known as ethnic cleansing.

I am also relieved that our troops are not being sent in to Bosnia to engage in combat, but rather are there to engage in peacemaking. Soldiers cannot ultimately do the hard work of reconciliation and healing. But they can hold the promise of establishing the conditions in which a deep and enduring reconciliation can be pursued. Part of any genuine peacemaking must also include the eventual removal of such forces where the parties to the conflict maintain the peace from within their hearts and through their inner resolve.

I pray for the day when all countries, including our own, will lay down their arms, a day when violent conflict will be obsolete. But that day is not yet at hand.

And the path our President has chosen is courageous and moral and deserving of our support. I ask that we remember him in prayer along with those troops who go to Bosnia for the cause of peace.

Edmond L. Browning
Presiding Bishop and Primate
December 4, 1995

95-1341

Consultation describes campus ministries as 'out on a limb'

by the Rev. Timothy Hallett

(ENS) Many Episcopalians remember when ministry with college and university students was a vibrant feature of church life and a vital component of mission. That priority--and the staffing and budgets that came with it--faded long ago and has completely vanished in many places, together with the youthful constituency it addressed. A dwindling number of continuing chaplaincies are increasingly vulnerable to budgetary cutbacks or elimination.

The current state of campus ministry was assessed in a recent ecumenical consultation under the theme, "Out on a Limb," when some 200 campus ministers, denominational and judicatory executives, agency board members, faculty, and administrators gathered at Union College in Schenectady, New York, November 30-December 2, to think about faith and ministry in the college and university setting.

At the invitation of Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, a group of Episcopalians who attended the conference, together with other leaders, continued a consultation of their own.

Redefining campus ministry

The ecumenical consultation at Union College brought together speakers and panelists who addressed both grim conditions and hopeful signs in higher education and in campus ministry.

The Rev. Sam A. Portaro, Jr., Episcopal chaplain at the University of Chicago, was keynote speaker, tracing the history of how campus ministry came to

be, came to decline, and comes to life. He stressed the importance of catechesis among a generation of students that has been taught very little of the Christian tradition, and of the need to raise fundamental questions of vocation and meaning in the midst of an educational context which begs those questions and seems to fear the answers.

Douglas Sloan of Columbia University's Teachers' College reviewed the churches' historic but failed attempt to engage higher learning in this century. What began as an attempt to relate faith and knowledge collapsed in the 1960's, he said, as the gap between quantitative knowledge and qualitative values widened into a chasm. Academic norms of knowing became increasingly objective and mechanical, setting aside questions of purpose and value, he maintained. Academic subjects dealing with qualities are put on the defensive as sciences and technologies rise in prominence. Faith is left entirely out of the equation.

Sharon Daloz Parks, senior research fellow in leadership and ethics at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, considered "How We Become the People We Need." Her studies, she said, show that constructive engagement with otherness--an experience "outside the tribe," so to speak--is a consistent component in the formation of people who serve the common good. Proximity to otherness is not sufficient; there must be real engagement, she said. Then, once one barrier has been transcended it creates a life hypothesis that other barriers can be transcended too, recomposing characterizations of "we" and "they" so that "they" are found to be more like "us" than we thought.

A mentoring community

Such transformation of thought and experience occurs most frequently in the context of a mentoring community--often a campus ministry--which provides opportunity and support for constructive engagement, Parks said. In that environment, young people can learn that it really does matter how you think. The people we need have thought deeply, committed deeply, and are deeply realistic, understanding that radical interdependence is not the way it could be, but the way it is, she said.

Douglas John Hall, recently retired as professor of Christian theology at McGill University in Montreal, explored the context in which we must do theology and ministry today. With the church in "diaspora," or no longer at the center of society's power structures, he said he sees an opportunity for reflection and enlightenment, a purposeful judgment beginning, appropriately, in the household of faith.

In the particular context of the university, we must no longer assume we have a "right" to be there, Hall said, for that right has often been exercised in predatory fashion in the past. The church may be able to help the university recover the distinction between know-how and wisdom, but only by relinquishing the church's

own sense of intellectual and spiritual superiority. And among students, who have been given little grounding in substantive faith, we must deepen the understanding of what Christianity really is, he said.

The view from the limb

Respondent Donna Schaper, area minister for the United Church of Christ in Western Massachusetts, reminded the conference that being out on a limb is not necessarily an unenviable position: Zaccheus went out on one so he could see better! Barbara Wheeler, President of Auburn Theological Seminary, noted that being the church in the diaspora puts us in contact with people we thought we were isolated from.

For the mainline churches, one of those distant groups is the Evangelical wing of Christianity, which must not be ignored, she suggested. The future of Christianity may well be forged between the Evangelicals and the mainline churches and not by either grouping alone. She also reminded the consultation that Christians are, after all, the people whose specialty is figuring out what to do when everything has changed.

An Episcopal approach

The presiding bishop's consultation brought together representatives of the Association of Episcopal Colleges and the Episcopal Society for Ministry in Higher Education with Thomas Chu, national coordinator for young adult and higher education ministries, Bill Anderson of the Episcopal Church Foundation, and Fred Burnham of Trinity Institute. Their meeting will be followed by an additional, larger one in the spring.

The reflective but somewhat somber mood of the ecumenical consultation gave way to real excitement as this new grouping of Episcopal agencies began to exchange ideas and resources for strengthening the church's ministry in higher education. Conversation quickly turned to a number of specific, practical initiatives, including strengthening the fundraising capabilities of Episcopal chaplaincies to make them less dependent on fluctuating, often dwindling diocesan support.

Equally important, the group decided, is the development of strong boards with a sense of their own leadership that are able to articulate the need for campus ministry and generate support for it. Much more attention needs to be paid to training and qualifications for campus ministries, lay and ordained, to ensure that those placed in such positions have the chance to succeed, they said.

Trinity Institute and the Education Committee of the Episcopal Church Foundation have begun work in common on initiatives in education and spiritual formation to reach out to young adults. With ESMHE and AEC as partners, a program of leadership development and spiritual formation could be developed to reach out to this critical generation.

Developing a university network

Through the Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network, Trinity Institute has expanded its educational offerings to a much wider audience than was possible only a few years ago. With its most recent offering, "Jesus 2000," a national symposium commemorating the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus, the network expands to a number of university campuses, with campus ministries facilitating the relationship.

A university network could well emerge, the group noted, with programs developed for that constituency, re-integrating campus ministries into the life of the university. Similarly, the long-nascent network of Episcopal faculty, once an active forum for the integration of religion and academic life, could take advantage of teleconferencing as a means of communication for those on the forefront of thinking the faith.

The time may be ripe to convert the church back to a sense of mission for youth and young adults, the group concluded. Campus ministry may still be out on a limb, but its Episcopal branch is looking to sprout new growth.

--The Rev. Timothy Hallett is an Episcopal chaplain at University of Illinois.

95-1342

Fundraising conference at Kanuga offers Americans and Canadians chance to share skills

Episcopal Life and Episcopal News Service staff

(ENS) Nearly 150 Canadian Anglicans and Episcopalians working in stewardship and fundraising met November 11-14 to share practical skills and new ideas about supporting Christian ministry.

"It's the first time we've ever had at least 70 percent of all the people responsible for fundraising in the Episcopal Church in one place at one time to talk about it," said the Rev. Hugh Magers, stewardship director at the Episcopal Church Center.

Participants, including both professionals in the field and volunteers, gathered at Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina, from 27 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, four provinces and the Dominican Republic.

Fred Osborn, director of development programs at the Episcopal Church

Foundation, said the conference combined three fundraising approaches that, he said, the church too often separates. "We brought together annual giving, planned giving and capital giving into a comprehensive theological framework," he said. "There was substantial representation from every sector."

Something for everyone

Through the battery of speakers and varied workshops, even veteran stewardship professionals reported that they gained new insights. "I learned that, depending on how you use an endowment, you can enrich a parish's life, or pauperize it," said Magers. "Too often it can have a crippling effect; it can hurt annual giving. But if endowment income is directed toward outreach, rather than maintenance, it has an enabling effect."

Some others agreed that the church's preoccupation with maintenance over mission can be to its detriment. And some expressed frustration that the knowledge fund raisers have gained is sometimes difficult to put into practice.

"The dilemma is that we don't seem to have people in every diocese that will pick up the ball and bounce it," said the Rev. William Crews, director of the Colorado Episcopal Foundation, which in less than 10 years has grown in value from \$30,000 to almost \$10 million. "The opportunities are unlimited if only we would take advantage of them."

A need for accountability

In a keynote address, Bishop Charlie McNutt, chief operating officer of the Episcopal Church, stressed the need for developing systems of accountability. "They provide the necessary boundaries within which we can build trust and interrelate with integrity as churches, families, friends, teams, organizations and communities," he said.

"Distrust is death-dealing. Trustworthiness is life-giving," he said. "Systems of accountability provide the boundaries and the arenas for building up trust and wholeness in community."

Workshops and seminar topics focused on parish stewardship, capital campaigns, annual funds and planned giving. Kanuga president Albert S. Gooch, Jr., noted that the symposium followed logically on the heels of the international Anglican consultation on evangelism at Kanuga in September, since the first event was about proclaiming the Gospel while the second was about providing the financial means to do so.

The value of pledging

Ted Budach, stewardship officer in the Diocese of California and a retired businessman, said he learned about the different approaches to stewardship

campaigns. Formidable challenges facing fundraisers include the fact that young families now returning to the church have had no education about the need for and value of pledging, he said.

"Without that tradition of stewardship, until they are fully incorporated in the community, they are going to be steadfast in their unwillingness to pledge," Budach said. "As well, the idea of stewardship being one's spiritual journey is not always viewed that way, even by many clergy," he said.

The symposium's sponsors were the office of financial development of the Anglican Church of Canada, the office of stewardship of the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church Foundation and Holliman Associates, Inc., of Harrisburg, Pa., an Episcopal fundraising consultant.

--With information from Frank Ballard, director of promotion at Kanuga Conferences.



reviews and resources

95-1343

ECTN announces upcoming teleconferences

(ENS) Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network (ECTN) has announced the broadcast of *Jesus at 2000*, the Trinity Institute's national symposium commemorating the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus. The teleconference, on February 9-10, will bring together six internationally recognized scholars to explore what can be known about Jesus of Nazareth at the turn of the millennium. The teleconference will be sent via satellite to downlink sites across the country. There will be an opportunity for questions from participating sites. For more information, call Stephen McCoy, ECTN project coordinator, at (800) 599-ECTN or (212) 602-0879, fax (212) 602-0717, or write to ECTN, 74 Trinity Place, New York, NY 10006-2088.

The 'Souper Bowl' calls for participants

(ENS) The "Souper Bowl," an interdenominational effort to collect money for contributions to local soup kitchens, is seeking participants. Youth from each church use large soup pots to collect donations as parishioners leave worship the morning of the game. Each congregation selects and sends their contribution directly to the ministry of their choice. According to the organization, the partnership has grown from twenty-two congregations the first year to nearly 2,500 congregations in 1995. Worshippers from 49 states gave over \$430,000 this past year and over \$900,000 has been generated since the "Souper Bowl" began. Recipients have ranged from soup kitchens and food banks to international missions and Habitat for Humanity affiliates. The effort began in the Senior High Youth Fellowship of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina in 1990. For more information, call 1-800-358-SOUP, or write to the Spring Valley Presbyterian Church, 125 Sparkleberry Lane, Columbia, South Carolina 29223, (803) 788-3589.

Photos available with this issue of ENS are:

1. Preliminary hearing held in trial of Bishop Walter Righter (95-1322)
2. Church attorneys argue case of Bishop Walter Righter (95-1322)
3. Church leaders urge President Clinton to protect the vulnerable (95-1324)
4. Episcopalians and Lutherans set for major ecumenical breakthrough (95-1326)
5. Teleconference focuses on broken political system (95-1335)
6. Episcopal bishop returns sacred land to Virginian tribe (95-1336)
7. Diocese of Colorado explores Episcopal version of Promise Keepers meeting (95-1337)

